COMMENTARY

AS IRAQ GOES COMMUNIST

Days of Decision in Baghdad

WALTER Z. LAQUEUR

COMPARED with the turmoil engendered in the Middle East by the Iraqi revolution, the Berlin crisis is a largely artificial contrivance. A summit meeting on Berlin may have some practical results, but it seems doubtful that the status quo in Europe will be seriously affected. Furthermore, the Soviet government can call off the crisis at any point if it so desires, as the Quemoy battle was called off. Such is hardly the case in the Middle East, in the throes of a deep internal crisis which is largely outside the control of the great powers involved in it. Unlike Europe, furthermore, new political facts are emerging in the Middle East which decisively alter the world power balance. This contrast between the main subject of diplomatic negotiation and the most important center of political change is reminiscent of the winter of 1948-49, when the first Berlin blockade diverted Western attention from the Communist triumph in China; and of the summer of 1955, when the Geneva summit conference drew attention away from the Soviet-Egyptian arms deal which marked the first Soviet breakthrough in the Middle East.

The current journalistic discussions about whether Iraq is already a "People's Democracy" recall scholastic disputations about the gender of angels. There is no single pattern under which a country becomes a Soviet satellite. The various "People's Democracies" in Eastern Europe and Asia came into existence under varying conditions. In Prague in February 1948, for example, the transition was dramatic and there can be no doubt about when full Communist control was established. But at what point did the Communists assume full power in such countries as Poland and Bulgaria—sometime in 1947, or much earlier?

Iraq's President Abdul Karim Kassem, it is sometimes argued, is not a Communist; but Rumania had a non-Communist President for a decade after 1945. The Communist party is not the only political party in Iraq; but sundry Peasant Unions continue to exist in Eastern Europe; there are three or four parties in East Germany, and several also in China, including a "left-wing" Kuomintang. Nor is the nationalization of key in-

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IN HIS book, *Nationalism and Communism in the Middle East* (1956), WALTER Z. LAQUEUR predicted the collapse of the Iraqi monarchy. In his article, "Nasser and the Iraqi Communists," in our February issue, he concluded that "the Communists will consolidate their hold over Iraq and extend it to other Arab countries." Mr. Laqueur, who is well-known to COMMENTARY readers, recently edited *The Middle East in Transition,* which was reviewed in our March number. His new book, *The Soviet Union and the Middle East,* will be published this month by Praeger.

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dustries or the seizure of foreign properties a reliable test; Britain in the one respect and Mexico in the other have gone much further than Iraq, yet there is little question of either's becoming a "People's Democracy."

In the last analysis, the only reliable test is the test of political power: to what extent do the Communists now rule Iraq? Surely they have made great advances since our last report, "Nasser and the Iraqi Communists" (COMMENTARY, February 1959).

President Nasser, alarmed by the growth of Communist influence in Baghdad and by the arrest there of his own sympathizers, came out strongly against Arab Communism last December. The first, comparatively urbane anti-Communist campaign conducted by the United Arab Republic's press and radio was directed chiefly at the Iraqi and Syrian Communists, who were accused of being factious and separatist. Other Communist parties and leaders were occasionally criticized, too; the criticisms of Nasser made at the 21st Soviet Party Congress by Premier Khrushchev and by Nuritdin Mukhitdinov, the USSR's leading Moslem politician, were rejected as unwarranted foreign interference in Arab affairs.

Nevertheless, Cairo at this time wished to prevent, at almost any price, any deterioration in its relations with Moscow. In a series of speeches in late February, Nasser reaffirmed his belief in Soviet friendship; he had received assurances, he announced, that no mass emigration of East European Jews to Israel was being contemplated. Accordingly, the anti-Communist campaign in the UAR was toned down. Since the Iraqis had also been fairly restrained in their comments on Nasser, the stage seemed set for a reconciliation between Cairo and Baghdad. It was reported that Nasser and Colonel Kassem would meet on the Iraqi-Syrian frontier and pave the way for a federative alliance between their two states.

This lull in the inter-Arab cold war came to an abrupt end on March 9, with the abortive revolt against Baghdad led by Colonel Shawwaf in Mosul. A rebellion on the part of the pan-Arab and anti-Communist officers had clearly been brewing for some time, with active help from the UAR, but we have no way of knowing whether it was indeed scheduled to begin on March 9, or whether Colonel Shawwaf was provoked to act by a "Partisans of Peace" mass meeting in Mosul. In any case, the uprising was a dismal failure. Whoever was responsible for it had grossly underrated the extent to which the Communists had already acquired key positions in the Iraqi army; they were able to suppress it without much difficulty. Shawwaf, wounded in the bombing of his headquarters, was shot to death in the hospital by a male nurse. The tribesmen who had taken up arms in his support were easily subdued by rival tribes and by the People's Resistance, the Communist militia.

The next day there were mass demonstrations against the plotters in Baghdad and other cities, and a violent purge of non-Communists got under way. Nasser was publicly accused of complicity in Shawwaf's revolt. "Death to Nasser the Imperialist and Hashish-eater" was one of the milder slogans. For years the most popular hero of Baghdad, he was now hung in effigy—testimony to the fickleness of the mob in Middle Eastern capitals. The propaganda warfare became incredibly bitter: a Jordanian newspaper commented that more hatred had been stirred up in the populace than the Arabs had felt during their war with Israel.

NASSER, on a state visit to Syria, at first reacted more in sorrow than anger. "Brethren, we have no right to be angry," he said in Damascus, "for we are people with a mission in which we have long believed, for which we have worked, and for the defense of which we have spilled the blood of martyrs. If we are hurt, offended, or insulted, we have no right to be enraged, because that is bound to harm those who are carrying on the mission." Such detachment, however, was not long maintained. In a series of speeches, Nasser soon asserted that the Communists had taken over Iraq with the aid of unscrupulous opportunists—including Colonel Kassem. The Iraqi President's

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name had previously been kept out of the fight, but now no opportunity was missed to attack the "divider" (*kassem* in Arabic) of Iraq: he had betrayed true Arabism, he was bringing Iraq under foreign rule, he had unleashed such terror that as many Iraqis had been killed in a day as had been murdered, jailed, and deported in all the long tyranny of Nuri es-Said.

The Cairo newspapers reported "unprecedented massacres" in Mosul and Baghdad. "Members of the Communist party," Cairo's official Middle East News Agency (MENA) reported on March 13, "rush into the houses of Arab nationalists and kill them. If they fail to find the master of the house, they kill the women and children. Killing is done on mere suspicion, hundreds of bodies lie on the streets, goods are looted from the shops. One sixty-year-old man was killed simply because he did not salute a Communist flag carried by members of the Communist militia." Other Egyptian sources claimed that Kassem had gone mad and was suffering from "hysteria and insomnia" (*sic*). The Communists had given him morphine injections to make him sleep; while he was under the influence of the drug they compelled him to sign state documents, according to a physician just returned from Baghdad. Professor Wajih Abd al Aziz, a Baghdad teacher, reported that "there are no trials; only one sentence for Arab nationalists—death." A priest named Baqtar said that the Communists went out at night to mark the homes of the Arab nationalists with the letters S, Q, or SQ. In the morning, squads of armed men executed the instructions these letters conveyed: S meant "loot and plunder," Q meant "kill the members of the household," and SQ, "loot and kill" (MENA, March 20).

According to one version (*Al Gumhuriya*, March 16), Kassem was a Western agent: "Butcher of Iraq, you puzzle me! You are neither naive nor stupid. You are a Moslem, yet at the same time you are not a Moslem. You are a Communist and yet not a Communist. Can you then be a Western agent disguised in Communist clothing and hired by the West to strike at Arab nationalism?" Another Cairo source declared that Iraq was another Israel. Most of its new Communist leaders were of Jewish parentage, and so were the Soviet leaders. Israeli women Communists were directing the slaughter of Iraqi patriots, and soon the Iraqis would sign a peace treaty with Israel.

No holds were barred in the Egyptian press attack on Moscow. "Russia has unmasked its eternal Czarist imperialist face," a Nasserite newspaper wrote, "and it is fortunate for the Arabs that they have at least had their eyes opened to the Communist menace." Other papers emphatically declared that Communism had now become the greatest danger threatening the Arab world. Nasser himself, in another speech at Damascus, declared that Communism aimed not merely to establish its dictatorship over Iraq, but to detach Syria from Egypt and found a Red "Fertile Crescent." According to the MENA political commentator (March 18), Khrushchev, convinced that Western influence in the Arab world had been liquidated, was now ready to junk the neutralists, whom Moscow had supported in their effort to drive the West out of the Middle East; but the Arab people would repel the new challenge of Communist imperialism as resolutely as they had fought the West.

THE reactions in Iraq were at least as full-blooded. Nasser was a new Pharaoh, a disciple of Goebbels, Hitler, and Mussolini, the head of Egypt's Masonic Lodges, a whore, a homosexual (a similar charge was made in Egypt against Kassem). A torrent of vituperation—much of it unprintable here—poured from the Iraqi capital. "Hitler and Mussolini also used to act behind a smokescreen of Christianity [*sic*], just as Abdel Nasser now acts behind the smokescreen of Islam." Nasser has become an open enemy of the Soviet Union, has renounced the Bandung principles of positive neutrality, has—in short—embraced the Eisenhower Doctrine!

The attacks on Nasser as a "fascist" and "Nazi" are of symptomatic interest; these terms have never had any particularly de-

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rogatory force among the Arabs. That they should now be employed leads one to suspect that relatively sophisticated Communists are already applying the party line inside the Iraqi propaganda agencies. This suspicion is strengthened by the attacks on Nasser—*Al Ray al Am,* March 20, and Baghdad Radio, March 24—for meeting with "Tito the imperialist." One can often distinguish fellow-travelers from party-line Communists by their attitudes toward Tito.

Still another detail reminiscent of Moscow in 1937 and Prague in 1952 was a dramatic announcement by Colonel Fadhil al Madawi, presiding judge of the revolutionary tribunal in Baghdad. The wife of one of the defendants in the Mosul treason trial, Madawi exclaimed, had offered to kill her husband with her own hands. Madawi also is wont to scream for capital punishment in Vishinsky style: "Kill him—kill the scourge!"

Madawi is the Iraqi revolution incarnate —a combination of Fouquier-Tinville, Senator McCarthy, and Charlie Chaplin. The sessions of his court, which are televised, have become the chief public spectacle of the revolution. There has rarely been anything like it. The accused—a pillar of the old regime, or a pan-Arabist—is brought into the courtroom and the proceedings begin. But Madawi is a man of little patience and wide interests; after a few sentences he interrupts, and is soon discussing Fidel Castro or the situation in Formosa. He mentions the name of Kassem, the "sole leader," and the courtroom claque bursts into frantic applause. An enthusiastic onlooker gets up and recites a long poem. Madawi is touched, and in a hoarse voice recites one of his own poems. More applause. The defendant manages to get in a few words, but Madawi cuts in again with a speech about Nyasaland and the character of the late Ernest Bevin. He confuses Bevin with Aneurin Bevan, but nobody minds, and he follows this with an obscene joke about Nasser. Madawi is an immense success, and his court is a microcosm of the Iraqi revolution.

Cairo has cried wolf so often that its accounts of Communist terror in Iraq are not readily believed. Still, even discounting all the horror stories, the fantastic tales about burnings of the Koran in Baghdad squares, and similar fabrications, a grain of truth remains in the picture Cairo presents. The pan-Arab, pro-Nasser elements in Iraq have indeed been suppressed, and the Communists dominate the Baghdad streets and most of the ministries.

WE HAVE seen four distinct stages of the Iraqi Revolution since the uprising last July 14.* In the first stage (July-September 1958), the old regime was overthrown; the new military junta was aided by a number of civilian advisers and by the heads of the former opposition parties—the right-wing Istiqlal, the left-wing National Democrats, and the pan-Arab Ba'ath. The Communists were in a minority at this point, and none represented the party officially. In the streets, however, Communist militants, released from prisons and concentration camps, energetically consolidated their hold over mass organizations: the Partisans of Peace; the Workers' Union and Liaison Committee; the unions of teachers, artists, engineers, physicians, and journalists; the associations of farmers, students, and economists; the Democratic Youth; the Defense of Women's Rights League; and many others. Even the Chamber of Commerce soon passed under Communist control. Several *ulema* (Moslem preachers) hailed the Communists as fighters for the social ideals of Islam.

*Before the revolt, there had been two parallel conspiracies in the Iraqi Army. The larger group, headed by Colonel Abdul Selim Arif, was pan-Arab in orientation; a smaller cell, to which Kassem belonged, was under Communist control. The two groups united in 1956. Then, according to Fa'iq as-Samarai, Iraqi Ambassador to Egypt until this March, the Communists betrayed the pan-Arab officers to the government of Nuri es-Said. Samarai, one of the civilian leaders in the uprising, charged in his letter of resignation (March 27, 1959) that, as a result of Communist duplicity, "a series of transfers and retirements was carried out which embraced most of the free officers [a list of names follows] . . . the Communist cell had apparently found that it would be better for them to kill two birds with one stone. . . ."

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In the second stage (September-December), Colonel Arif, Iraq's would-be Nasser, was ousted, thus placing the other Ba'athists in the regime under a cloud. They were not deposed just then, but power gradually shifted into the hands of their Communist aides. Wasfi Taher, Kassem's pro-Communist aide-de-camp, and his brother Loutfi Taher, a party member, now emerged as the *eminences grises* of the regime. The Communists gained control of the government radio station and most of the Baghdad newspapers. The Kurds in the north, traditionally pro-Russian, declared for the Communists. Most important, the party achieved full control of the People's Resistance.

In the third stage (December 1958-March 1959), the leading pan-Arabists, including Colonel Arif and Rashid Ali (who had just returned from seventeen years in exile), were brought to trial. Nasserites and members of the right-wing Istiqlal were removed from leading positions in the government. The non-Communist wing of the National Democrats, led by Kamil Chaderchi, lost influence. Minister of Information Hussein Jamil flew to India and did not return; his functions were assumed by his Communist deputy. Pan-Arabists in the army high command were also purged—including the head of the military academy and the commanders of the first, second, and fifth divisions. The Communists gained decisive influence in the air force, tank corps, and military intelligence. A Communist, Taha ash Shaikh Ahmad, took over the political police.

THE latest stage began with the suppression of the Shawwaf revolt. Since then the Communists have been consolidating their hold throughout the country, while the purge of pan-Arabists is reaching into the middle ranks of the government and army. In fact, the Communists seem almost ready—if it were not for certain international complications—to proclaim the foundation of the first Arab "People's Democracy." Their achievement in ten months has been spectacular.

The *Times* of London complained the other day that the Iraqi Communist party is somewhat of a mystery and has no overt leadership. This is not quite correct. In recent months, leaders of the party have appeared quite openly, and local papers have even published short biographical sketches of some of the "Old Bolsheviks." The Politburo, roughly speaking, consists of three groups: those imprisoned in Iraq under Nuri es-Said (Aziz al Haj, the agit-prop leader, spent fifteen years, Mohammed Abu el Iss twelve, in various prisons and camps); those who returned from exile in Cairo, Damascus, or Paris; and those who were stationed in Eastern Europe (presumably Sofia) and have been groomed for ultimate leadership of a Communist Iraq.

One of the best known members of this Politburo is Abdul Kader Ismail. He began his political career in the early 30's in Chaderchi's populist group (today's National Democrats). He helped found a society "to combat illiteracy" (i.e., to study Lenin), was expelled from Iraq in 1937, returned in 1945, and had to leave again in 1947. After that, he lived in Egypt, where he occasionally wrote articles on such subjects as "Marx and the National Question." President Nasser may have had him in mind in complaining about ungrateful Iraqi Communists, "whom we gave food and shelter." Other well known Politburo leaders are Professor Abdulla al Bustani of Baghdad Law School, a leader of Communist intellectuals, and Mohammed Hassan al Uwaidi, who is said to be the party secretary and who may be identical with "Salim Adel," the Iraqi representative at the 21st Congress in Moscow.

Outside the Politburo are two groups who proved important in the struggle for power: the "independent" lawyers and the pro-Communist colonels. The Communists are no exception to the fact that politics in Iraq are dominated by lawyers. The group of so-called "independent" lawyers, led by Aziz Sharif, Tawfiq Munir, and Kamil Kazanji, has been serving the party for fifteen years, but has remained nominally "independent" for tactical reasons. (Kazanji, who was killed in the Mosul uprising, was

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officially a left-wing National Democrat, but he was much closer to the Communists than to Chaderchi. He may have been slated to lead his party into a merger with the Communists, to become an Iraqi Grotewohl or Fierlinger.) In the past, the task of these independents was to set up new "progressive" parties whenever the Communist party itself was outlawed. On occasion, the legal front leaders and the illegal party leaders quarreled; Aziz Sharif, for example, once espoused a united-front line which the then-secretary of the Communist party violently attacked as a "liberal deviation." Now that the party is out in the open, there is no need for window-dressing organizations of the type the lawyers used to set up; but the Communists still do require sundry "mass organizations" to manipulate public opinion, and the lawyers will be useful.

The pro-Communist colonels include Madawi (who is Kassem's cousin), two of the President's aides, Wasfi Taher and Ghadban as Sad, and air force commander Jalal al Awqati. None of these men has read Marx or Lenin; a serious Communist would consider the level of their political education extremely low. They are ambitious men, but not very clever; in their intellectual makeup and social origins, they are of the same type as Colonel Nasser and his Cairo associates. The degree of their Communist sympathies varies with circumstances. With sufficient inducement, some would shift their political loyalties tomorrow; a few may in due course become authentic Communists; in the case of a lasting Communist victory, most of them would be gradually discarded. At the present time, however, their powerful service to the Communist cause cannot be discounted.

THE rival world blocs have both, curiously, tried to remain aloof from this struggle between Nasserism and Iraqi Communism. East and West have similarly expressed their regret that Arab should fight Arab. For once, however, the Soviet Union has been slightly less successful than the West in a maneuver of this sort. Although Khrushchev has repeatedly declared that the USSR will never cease to support the United Arab Republic, the future of Soviet-Egyptian relations is now very much in the balance. Moscow has tried hard to have it both ways and keep out of the propaganda war, but whether it can refrain much longer is doubtful. Gradually, it will have to pay the price for its involvement in the Middle East. An all-out Soviet attack on Nasser would surely have serious repercussions among his various Arab, Asian, and African admirers.

The tendency in Washington and London has been to give the new Iraqi regime the benefit of the doubt. The extent of Communist influence has been underrated, but it is difficult to say what other approach the Western powers could take; they have been compelled to act "as if" the Iraqi regime is still independent and neutral. London seems inclined to regard the future of Iraqi oil as the decisive test; but this may be misleading, for the Communists would doubtless prefer the orderly withdrawal of the British to a sudden expropriation, which would damage Iraq's economy more than it would the West. A Communist government may be perfectly willing to do business with the Iraq Petroleum Company up to the very moment it is ready, with Soviet aid, to assume full control.

Another erroneous assumption now current is that the Cairo-Baghdad split is a conflict between "nationalism" and "international Communism." It is, in fact, a struggle for power *within* the Arab nationalist movement, of which the Communists are accepted as part and parcel not only in Iraq but elsewhere in the Arab world. The Arab Communists are as nationalist as Nasser, and Communists besides; his attacks on them as "foreign agents" are much less effective than some Western observers presume. In any event, it would be most unwise —even on tactical grounds—if further disillusion with Iraq led Western statesmen to put their money on Nasser; he needs Western enmity, not friendship, to retain his status as a bona fide Arab nationalist.

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On the whole, Nasser's position is not enviable. His struggle with Iraq is a race against time in which the odds favor Baghdad. Unless he can succeed in overthrowing the present Iraqi regime in the next year, his own chances of survival are not good. Theoretically, a reconciliation is still possible, but things have gone so far that it seems highly improbable. In the propaganda war now raging, Nasser speaks with the louder voice (his radio and newspapers reach a wider audience), but his arguments have their strongest appeal to the most backward and reactionary elements among the Arabs. His exhortations to combat godless Communism with the Holy Koran may have some success in the remoter regions of Jordan and Saudi Arabia, but in the big cities even the mob will soon develop a sales-resistance to it (they are not all *that* religious). Meanwhile, Nasser is losing his hold on the intelligentsia and the new educated classes whose support he needs most. He has promised so much, especially in the economic and social fields, and so little has come of it despite all the foreign aid he has obtained. Living standards in Egypt continue to decline, and the once prosperous economy of Syria is in dreadful disarray. Even a foreign adventure is no way out for Nasser; the auspices are less propitious than ever before.

The Iraqi economy is not in good shape either. The workers have been on strike or at celebrations in Baghdad just about every Monday and Thursday. Wage demands are being pressed everywhere, and productivity—according to the Iraqi press itself—has much decreased. Prices have skyrocketed. Nevertheless, Iraq is a richer country than Egypt and it can now count on almost unlimited Soviet aid.

ALTHOUGH the Communists have taken power in Iraq in all but name, they can lose it if they are reckless. There are two great differences between Iraq today and Eastern Europe a dozen years ago, one less favorable and one more so to the Communist cause. On the one hand, the Iraqis do not have the benefit of the presence of the Soviet army; if civil war were to break out, it is by no means certain that the Soviet Union could or would intervene. On the other hand, pro-Communist and pro-Soviet sentiment within Iraq is far stronger than it was in any East European country (with the possible exception of Bulgaria) after World War II.

Power in Iraq is now shared by a coalition which includes the pro-Communist colonels, the "independent" lawyers, and the Communist party itself. It would be most prudent for the Communists to prolong this coalition until party control is firmly established in the hands of loyal cadres. Over-assertive moves on their part now might not only provoke new counterattacks with Iraq, but would doubtless have undesirable repercussions elsewhere in the Arab world and in Asia. Thus, it may be a year or two before the situation is ripe for the establishment of an openly Communist government, the appointment of a party member as chief of state, and so on.

"Our demands are in no way socialist demands," the Iraqi party secretary declared on April 1, thus indicating the deliberateness with which the Communists would like to proceed. Nevertheless, unforeseen circumstances and the unpredictable human element may compel the party to make its move earlier. The pathetic colonel Kassem has been built up as the great hero and "sole leader" of their revolution, and thus far he has served the Communists well. But what if a group of dissatisfied officers captures his prestige for its own purposes? What of possible splits in the Communist ranks (the history of Iraqi Communism is full of them)? The party emerged from underground in July with about two thousand militants; since then, it has had to absorb thousands (perhaps tens of thousands) of new recruits, including such ideologically dubious characters as Madawi, the Taher brothers, and the other Communist colonels. All these things present difficulties for the Iraqi Communists in the present stage of their revolution.

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On the other hand, if the Communists do consolidate their power over Iraq, it will be without direct Soviet assistance—and, as Khrushchev must have learned from Stalin's experience, such native revolutions always cause trouble for Moscow at a later stage. Khrushchev may be well advised not to put too much trust in either the ability or the loyalty of the Iraqi Communists, or like Elizabeth I, "in trust he may find treason." Khrushchev does not seem to be the trustful kind, in any case, and he knows that his new Arab comrades are not of the same Communist mettle as Lenin and Stalin, Mao and Tito. Whatever their faults, however, the Baghdad Communists have been fare more energetic and skillful than their adversaries. And their relative superiority has, for some time now, been the surest key to events in Iraq.

FROM THE WANDERING JEW

IRVING FELDMAN

O Jerusalem, if I forget thee, may I die!
If I forget thee not, how will I live!

The Gates of Gaza

I sidelong in this obscene world going,
Under battery of filth, bawdry of elements,
Perjurious day forsworn and grieving
At night's bar, all loud and absurd,
Absurd and foul, in this butchery
Of flesh, carnival of fur, I
Running, and on my back the Gates
Of Gaza from the world's muck pulled
Like a rotten tooth—to be carried where?

Never to rest, never to sink down at road's end,
Knowing the journey over, the thing done;
Never to reach settled city, never come home,
By every road moving from that;
Never to rest, accounting this taint of
The soul's honor, debasement of its gold;
Never to sleep, never to know long rhythms
Of earth, the water slowly moving, a light.

O Jerusalem, where shall I build thee? What hill
Is high enough? what earth so rich? what people
Good? Where shall I set down the Gates?
Having no city but this heart of weed and cloud,
Trampled and foraged by herd of folly,
By brutal bodies' violent milling there.
Ridden by goodness I go,
God, in the damp mist descending,
Running at my ankles like a dog.
Why for the pure task these tools of dirt?
This abstracted heart, this fever, this world?

The Face of God

Upon the altar of the kitchen stove,
Enameled white and shining with the cares
Of hands that giving graced with love
Three meals a day for thirty years—

There at Friday dusk it crouched beside
The week-end's pit, the mount of Sabbath:
A tumbler-candle dimly hissed and sighed,
Too sweet to judge, too nice for wrath.

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All night long the wax ran down
--Crying dead to whom we burnt that rod.
They in the ghostly tallow lay to drown
The bent body of the dying god

Who lit a platter-clock that ticked our sleep.
Its even hands dipped in the dark streaming
And up and down carried us in its sweep.
Chests rose and fell like empires dreaming.

And now I wander accused by that Sinai
In a glass, by muteness of our closet wish,
By a God humble, tiny, and good. And I
choke with pathos of a clean dish.

The Wailing Wall

O God, in my exile and affliction,
hear me!
From my enemies, save me! Scourge, burn,
hash,
Make their inner rot grow badges on their
flesh!
Why did You tempt me with goodness?
why do You crease
With pain? why this suffering that won't
cease?

Here am I stupidly living in sackcloth and
ash.
Why was I born just a year before the Crash?
Why'd my father lose his lots and his cash
And go jobless till his gentle lack of courage
Was endemic? Then why'd I grow in this
image?
How can I be a hero if I'm not half-a-fake
Like my cousins Joe and Jake?
To be Chosen--that means having only one
part.
But if I'm Elect, why all this fat around my
heart?
Why was I born in Brooklyn in the lower
middle-classes?
Is that a hero's place? Was Moses freckled!
Samson wear glasses!
Why me? Haven't You had FDR and
Cecil de Mille?
(Pardon me, O Lord, if I question Your will,
But wouldn't Seymour or Sherman have
done as well?)
Why do You tell me to build when I want
to destroy?
Can't a Jew get that job, is it only for a goy?
Can't a Jew be bad and mean, why sad and
nice?
Do You think it's better to have ulcers than
a vice?
Why, when I damn others, must I look for
my own guilt?
If the evil aren't all bad, the good all good,
can't I cry, Tilt!
Couldn't You come as an angel, not a pebble
in my shoe?
When I crashed Katz's car did he have to
sue?
And then in court, why didn't You put in
Your Word?
Don't I know what Sisyphus doesn't, that
only pain's absurd?
Then why don't You teach me to strike and
not to complain?
Why do You let me suffer if it's not to suffer
better again?
Isn't my hardship bitter? my pain pain?
Why did You send that toadying
bureaucrat against me?
And that spiteful sage and that selfish
landlady?
Why, if You love me, didn't You strike them
down?
Bend closer, My God, I can complain till all
the stars drown.

Irving Feldman, who now teaches English at Kenyon College, has contributed criticism and verse to Commentary. Among his previous poems published were "The Saint" (December 1956), "Reading Rousset's *L'Univers Concentrationnaire*" (April 1958), and "Adam" (June 1958).

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BRITAIN AND THE BOMB

What Price Coexistence?

G. L. ARNOLD

LONDON

"As something of a connoisseur of political demonstrations, I have no doubt that the last stages of this year's Aldermaston march provided the greatest turn-out for any cause that London has seen since the war. When I travelled along it from head to tail, the head was entering Trafalgar Square, and the column proceeded virtually unbroken down Whitehall, round Parliament Square, along Victoria Street . . . and well into Kensington. There were curious sights to be seen: the editor of Tribune *and the music critic of the* Spectator *in the column, and the assistant editor of the* New Statesman, *with a pram on the pavement. . . . But the sight of 15,000 people walking across London was undeniably impressive. . . ."*—The Spectator, *April 3, 1959.*

AMONG the minor irritants inseparable from living (if one can call it living) in the second half of this century, protest demonstrations against the danger of nuclear fall-out must occupy a considerable place. What good they can do the inhabitants of a middle-sized country such as England is not clear, since it must be obvious that in the event of global catastrophe it will make no difference what kind of policy the British government has been pursuing; while anything short of total disaster is not likely to involve this country in the sort of conflict that opponents of the H-bomb regard as immoral. But motives are no less effective for being mixed: it is easy to discredit the all-out pacifists; it is more difficult to counter the plea that Britain should renounce a "deterrent" whose possession seems to many either useless or suicidal. The protest marchers in fact have a political case, though wrapped up in traditional moralizing phraseology, and this circumstance accounts for the fact that this year's demonstration drew out—in addition to the personages mentioned above—the chairman of the Trades Union Congress (who addressed the Trafalgar Square rally) and the leader of the biggest single union in the TUC. Neither Mr. Robert Willis nor Mr. Frank Cousins are in the slightest danger of being mistaken for fellow-travelers (though Mr. Cousins has long been a supporter of Mr. Bevan), but they have now become fellow-marchers. The annual protest demonstration against Britain's manufacture of nuclear weapons can therefore no longer be written off as a pacifist stunt. It may even compel Mr. Bevan to revise the qualified support he gave the official platform on this issue at the last Labor party conference.

If it were not for this sudden and rather surprising surge of left-wing opinion against the Bomb, the political scene at the moment would be pretty dull. This statement may conflict with the impression apparently held abroad that Mr. Macmillan's recent series of pilgrimages electrified the British public and caused a thrill of national pride to run through the country. It is possible that the original announcement of his impending trip to Moscow last February did have some such effect for a couple of days, but when it turned out that he was merely going on a reconnaissance, there was a sharp drop in the emotional temperature; and by the time Khrushchev had got over his toothache and consented to a Foreign Ministers' meeting, the public had reverted to its customary in-

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difference. Connoisseurs of political nonsense were kept busy for another week or so, trying to decide whether the government or the opposition was ahead by a length in the opinion polls, but by the end of March it was plain that the glamor of Mr. Macmillan's fur hat had worn off considerably faster than the lure of Mr. Chamberlain's umbrella twenty years earlier. Thereafter it became the chief business of official spokesmen to resent precisely this comparison, the more so since it was being made by—of all people—the Germans. By the beginning of April, the *Times* was constrained to report from Bonn that relations with the Federal Republic had never been worse, and that Dr. Adenauer had finally lost patience with the British. The latter, he was reported to have told a select gathering of supporters, must be taught once and for all that they could not lead on the Continent. "Germany and France are the leaders in Europe." Paris agreed, though de Gaulle counselled Bonn to accept the Oder-Neisse frontier. This shocking suggestion stirred only the mildest protest across the Rhine. "It would seem that the French can do no wrong, even when they withdraw most of their troops and wreck the free trade area," commented the *Times* correspondent. He might have added that most Germans take a dim view of British attempts to sabotage the European Common Market, and that even adherents of the rival free trade area scheme resent Mr. Macmillan's escapade in Moscow: a sentiment formulated with remarkable clarity in Dr. Adenauer's valedictory broadcast some days after the press had leaked news of the chill in Anglo-German relations.

Such considerations inevitably impinge upon the issue of German unification, and are therefore not quite germane to the subject of British domestic affairs with which this report is principally concerned. Suffice it to say that most observers in London will be surprised if this summer's inevitable showdown over Berlin does not find the British government in the role of more or less honest broker between East and West. This is not because the British care less about German unification than their allies (in any case a difficult feat, since even the West Germans do not seem to care as much as one might expect), but because they are tired of the cold war and regard the Berlin crisis as a suitable opportunity for stabilizing the *status quo*. Such aims cannot be avowed, and there will be plenty of disclaimers before the summer is over. Nonetheless there is now little doubt that stabilization along the present political line in Central Europe is regarded as desirable in London. The official argument of course is that the alternative might be world war over Berlin—not an attractive prospect. There is no need to go over this dispute once more: between now and the summit meeting, rivers of ink are certain to be spilled, and all the experts are going to have their say. Here it is simply intended to explain why the spring of 1959 finds the British government and public in a mood to have done with the cold war.

II

In considerable part, the solution to this puzzle has to do with the dull subject of economics, of which more will have to be said. But this is not the whole story. Other factors have been at work, among them gradual disillusionment among the Conservatives with the notion that Britain can still play the part of a world power. This idea was never very plausible, and it was finally knocked on the head by the Suez fiasco. Since then, control of Cyprus has been relinquished without so much as a murmur from the Tory back-benchers, and even the loss of the RAF's "staging post" at the Habbaniya airbase in Iraq has been swallowed, if not with good grace, at least with a frozen countenance. It is now accepted that Britain is no longer a great power in the traditional sense—a discovery rationalized by the reflection that "splendid isolation" of the late Victorian sort was a passing aberration anyhow. The *Economist*, in its traditional role of explaining the facts of life to Conservatives, has recently (March 7) painted a fairly agreeable picture of what the new posture involves. According to its

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editorialists, "what is called the decline of British power in the world is not as depressing a phenomenon as it is usually assumed to be. Britain's imperial decline has not resulted from an absolute decline in the strength and energy of this country, but from changes elsewhere that have made the business of dominating others more difficult, as well as more obviously unrewarding, than it used to be . . . the growth of the Soviet Union and the United States has made the great-power competition stiffer than it ever was in the 19th century. . . . Britain's salvation has been its readiness to adjust itself to these facts, accepting the necessity of retreat in Asia and Africa, as Labor and Conservative governments alike have done since 1945. But the pace of adjustment is slow, and its reasons are not plainly enough stated and therefore not properly understood. False ideas of what is happening in the world produce an unfounded sense of inadequacy and failure, and lead to false decisions, like the decision in 1956 to dam up the stream of Arab nationalism by landing troops in Egypt. . . ." As for Middle Eastern oil, it can (according to the same source) be replaced by imports from across the Atlantic.

What is the bearing of this argument on NATO, and in particular on Germany and the Berlin crisis? ". . . Britain's actual behavior in two wars suggests that when it comes to a matter of life and death this country fully appreciates that its vital defense interests lie in Europe. Those experiences also show that the security of Europe requires the alliance of the United States, and that the true life-line of this country (as of Europe) runs not across the Indian Ocean but across the Atlantic. Therefore the American alliance is, and must continue to be, the iron framework of British policy." (*Ibid.*) There is scarcely an article in the traditional Tory declaration of faith that is not outraged by this conclusion, but the organ of the City is not concerned with Tory romanticism, but with economic and political reality. The Atlantic alliance comes first, and if this means jettisoning the British Empire's traditional claim to independent global status ("Indian Ocean life-line"), so much the worse. Of late, the City and its weekly oracle have even begun to toy with the notion of joining the European Common Market and letting Imperial Preference go hang. No wonder some despairing Tories have in recent months packed their bags and departed, either to the Antipodes or to Central Africa, where that pocket-sized Cecil Rhodes, Sir Roy Welensky, still keeps the flag flying.

WHAT further news have the descendants of Cobden and Bagehot for their Conservative subscribers (who cannot get over the fact that they have to read a Liberal weekly in order to discover what their own government is up to)? Chiefly this: "Whereas the Bulganin-Khrushchev talks in London in 1956 were largely wasted in a fruitless attempt to secure a free hand for Britain in the Arab world, the main subject of Mr. Macmillan's talks in Moscow in 1959 has been, as he said when he got back, 'these grave problems of the future of Central Europe.' . . . Why and by what authority does a British Prime Minister make the future of Central Europe his business? What could a British initiative hope to achieve in a matter that concerns the Atlantic alliance as a whole? The first question can be simply answered by asking who keeps troops in Berlin, and why. The answer to the second is more complicated. Clearly Mr. Macmillan had to face embarrassment in Moscow because Mr. Khrushchev wants to talk to a man whose decisions can bind the whole Atlantic alliance, and the British Prime Minister is not that man. . . . Through fortuitous circumstances, the British Prime Minister has been the only leading man of the Western alliance able and willing to undertake this action at this moment. The purpose of it was *not* to demonstrate that Britain can do something on its own. . . ."

If these lengthy quotations (for which an apology is due to the reader) have made the point clear—the article from which they are taken, incidentally, is headlined "Towards the Nineteen-sixties"—a minor effort will at

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least not have been wasted. The point, it is perhaps unnecessary to emphasize, is that Britain must somehow get out of the great-power game *before* the 1960's close in. This does not imply lack of loyalty to the Atlantic alliance: on the contrary, this particular commitment comes first and is allotted precedence even over the traditional interests of the British Empire and/or Commonwealth. What the new outlook implies is a rational desire to eliminate all possible sources of conflict between East and West that are not absolutely rooted in the fundamental difference between their respective ways of life. This accomplished, coexistence can be made to work—though never in the sense intended by pacifist protest marchers, or readers of the *New Statesman*. There can be no *genuine* peace as long as Moscow and Peking continue to dream of world domination through world revolution; but there can be—there *must* be, if Britain is to survive—a *modus vivendi* that takes the deadly sting out of the cold war. From this standpoint, which is plainly that of the British government (though not of all the Tory backbenchers), Berlin—indeed Germany and Central Europe as a whole—is not so much a moral commitment as a nuisance. Or rather, it is a nuisance, and a source of danger, precisely because it unfortunately represents a moral commitment. Clearly, the ideal solution, from this point of view, is to shuffle the commitment off and let someone else—say Mr. Hammerskjold—carry it; equally clearly, this is not going to be easy. It may not even be feasible, though we shall certainly try to do our best. And what if this means that in a few years' time a neutralized and internationalized Berlin is peacefully swallowed up by Herr Ulbricht's People's Republic? Very unfortunate for the Berliners, no doubt, but perhaps a price worth paying for the sake of "stability" in Central Europe. Besides, can it not be held that the real chance of unifying Germany was missed in 1949, after the Berlin blockade, and that the Germans themselves are to blame?

And so from Central Europe to Central Africa, and things that really interest us.

III

In the context of British politics, as briefly sketched out in the foregoing, Central Africa does three things: 1) It takes our minds off Central Europe and allows us to concentrate on race relations, Sir Roy Welensky, and other 19th-century phenomena; 2) It provides outdoor relief for hungry Tories, colonial settlers, unemployed ex-officers and others who cannot find a suitable niche in the remodelled and partly democratized Britain of the 1950's; 3) It offers a chance to give backbone to the Commonwealth, now that India is gone. (Not to mention the fact that Nairobi [Kenya] seems destined to replace Habbaniya [Iraq] as an airbase and RAF staging-post to the Indian Ocean, Australasia, and the Far East.)

But before these agreeable visions can materialize, a political framework must be found to contain the emerging African nationalist movement: principally in Central Africa, where successive British governments have over the past decade tried to satisfy the urge of the 300,000 white settlers for local self-government, without driving the still rather inchoate African nationalist groups to the point of rebellion. Of late there has been a setback: African feeling in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland (the latter almost wholly "black") has come to the boil, in a form which has plainly scared the authorities and driven the settlers further to the right—though not yet to the point of rebellion against the London government. In addition to the customary clashes, arrests, and charges of sinister foreign influences, there has been evidence that the "partnership" formula is breaking down. When the projected Central African Federation becomes autonomous next year, it looks like turning into a small-scale replica of the South African Union. Perhaps disaster can still be staved off; perhaps it is too late. Certainly the Labor party, for all its present concern over the situation, has little to show in the way of past actions to eliminate the color bar and promote something nearer democracy in Britain's remaining African colonies. Yet it is noteworthy that neither the Conserva-

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tives nor Labor seem to question the importance of Central Africa to Britain. It is widely regarded as the main touchstone of imperial policy.

This last point may be disputed. The Labor party and a number of Liberals (not, however, the editors of the *Economist*) clearly prefer Dr. Nkrumah as a Commonwealth associate to Sir Roy Welensky, or his Southern Rhodesian colleague, Sir Edgar Whitehead, who last month was with difficulty prevented from rushing through emergency legislation that would have done away with *habeas corpus*. (Not that there is much regard for legal and constitutional niceties in Dr. Nkrumah's preserve, but to his numerous British admirers, two blacks *do* make a white.) However, economics come in at this point to tilt the balance in favor of those African territories—all on the East coast—where European settlement has meant a large inflow of investments. The newly emancipated British and French territories on the West coast may be more up-to-date politically, but when it comes to capital investment they lag considerably behind the regions still in the grip of old-fashioned colonialism. Throughout West Africa and French Equatorial Africa (now remodelled to republican status) the investment rate fluctuates between 8 and 12 per cent of gross income: not quite enough to break through the "sound barrier" of modernization. The East African territories do better, though only in Kenya can the economy (almost completely controlled by white settlers) be described as "dynamic." And when we come to the two Rhodesias and the Union of South Africa—politically and spiritually the most deplorable of the lot—the rate of growth is at a level hardly equalled anywhere outside the Communist world. For over a decade, investment in this area (cf. the *Economist*, December 13, 1958) has absorbed 20 to 30 per cent of gross income; the economies have been *growing* at an annual rate of 6 per cent—compared with 4 per cent in the U. S., and a normal growth rate of 3 per cent in Europe—and South Africa, under the Nationalist regime, has even been able to dispense with foreign capital, while investing something like 20 per cent of its own income.

Economics, of course, is not the whole of life. It is, however, the foundation of most other things. Life in the newly independent, or autonomous, territories of West Africa may be more agreeable (certainly for intellectuals), but power and wealth are likely to flow to the colonial East, unless African nationalist movements can cause sufficient trouble to frighten the investors and force the settlers to come to terms with native African sentiment. This, clearly, is going to be the issue of the 1960's, and to many thinking people in Britain it is far more interesting than the stale problems of Central Europe: an area wrecked by two world wars and inhabited by nations who are now paying for their age-old habit of settling their conflicts by force. Also Central Africa, from the British viewpoint, has the merit that we can do something about it—perhaps even display our famed capacity for compromise and statesmanship—whereas we can do very little (if the truth be told: nothing at all) about Central Europe.

With these considerations in mind, one need not be surprised at finding the pages of our newspapers, periodicals, and specialized reviews increasingly dominated by discussions of racial problems in general, and African affairs in particular. The Third British Empire—supposing such a creation to be feasible—is going to be based on Africa, if it can find a base anywhere. Africa, too, is the Labor party's last chance to practice its liberating mission. Both parties in fact can aspire to more than insular status only by finding solutions for Africa, imperialist or democratic, as the case may be. Without Africa the Conservative party must shrink to a provincial replica of U. S. Republicanism; the Labor party, to just another Social-Democratic movement on the Scandinavian pattern. Lastly, the faithful Liberal remnant has sought and found in Africa a cause—racial equality—which appeals both to its principles and to its hopeful search for something that does not involve major social

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changes. At home, such causes are hard to come by, though every now and then the authorities obligingly provide civil libertarians with an issue, e.g. by banning the sale of *Lolita,* or refusing to make life easier for homosexuals. Prison reform—always good for a humanitarian campaign in our more progressive newspapers and periodicals—has lately been taken up by the Conservative government. Education remains a delicate subject as long as prominent Liberals and Socialists send their children to privileged private schools. Racial equality, on the other hand, offers every conceivable target to the reformer: it is safe (there are few colored people in Britain), it is moral, and it is indubitably progressive. Also, it really is relevant to what is happening in Africa, which is our only remaining overseas territory of any consequence.

To be fair, Africa is productive of some exceedingly tough characters who make a passable foil for our democratic gladiators: Dr. Verwoerd, with his *apartheid* and his undisguised plans for pulling South Africa out of the Commonwealth if interfered with; Sir Roy Welensky and Sir Edgar Whitehead in the Rhodesias, with their 300,000 white settlers and their shaky commitment to racial "partnership"; and flamboyant characters like the aged Lord Malvern who after nearly half a century's work in Central Africa recently returned to Westminster to make their Lordships' flesh creep with threats of secession ("I know you are very indignant that we have a little army of our own, and an air force, and so forth"). Who shall blame us if we find such challenges (which after all are manageable) more satisfactory than the endless tug-of-war in Central Europe? It may be said that the real comparison is with Little Rock, and that after all Little Rock has not prevented Washington from formulating a global policy. But in the first place, Governor Faubus has not threatened secession; and secondly, *our* global policy (insofar as Britain still has one that is distinct from that of NATO), pivots on just those African territories which also breed the racial and political conflicts referred to. If the Commonwealth is to have any reality, these matters must be settled—and soon. Before another decade is out, it may be too late.

IV

As NOTED above, these political choices are partly conditioned by the country's economic health. Something must therefore be said about this far from fascinating subject. Fortunately, this can be done fairly briefly, for the facts are well established and not really in dispute; even the number of possible interpretations is limited.

The principal fact is that over the past three years, financial stability has been bought at the cost of economic stagnation. Since 1956 prices have not risen significantly, but neither has output. The balance of trade has improved, mainly because of fortuitous changes in world market prices; and the payments balance, on which the solidity of sterling depends, has become more favorable: but only because imports have been artificially held below the level at which British industry would be fully employed. Yet mass unemployment has been avoided, consumption has gone up, and taxes have been lowered. The electorate therefore is reasonably content. It does not understand that the cost of economic stagnation can be formidable in the long run; that failure to expand productive capacity translates itself into failure to expand foreign sales in the face of German and Japanese competition. Already Britain has slipped to third place—behind West Germany—as regards volume of total exports. This momentous change occurred last year, while the newspapers were busy celebrating the sensational improvement in the balance of payments. In shipbuilding Britain has been overtaken by both Germany and Japan: neither of these traditional rivals had a single shipyard left in 1945. They are now out in front.

This trend represents an acceleration of tendencies which have been at work since the war, under both Labor and Conservative governments. Though both parties, in the time-honored fashion, blame each other,

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neither has been successful in overcoming the built-in handicaps. Under Labor a somewhat higher rate of investment and expansion was purchased at the cost of inflation and controls; under the Conservatives, financial stability and decontrol, plus rising consumption and lowered taxes, have been accompanied by an even lower investment rate, and latterly by absolute stagnation. (In 1958 industrial production *fell* by 1 per cent, while all other European countries scored advances of varying magnitude). It has not so far been possible to combine a high rate of expansion with financial stability —a feat easily managed by half a dozen European countries, notably Western Germany. Rather, every attempt to let the economy produce at top gear has resulted in a foreign exchange crisis. At the moment, the possibility of another Labor government is already having the effect of making foreign bankers nervous about holding sterling: Labor is "the party of inflation," quite apart from its reputed hostility to private enterprise (the latter an ideological hang-over rather than a real issue, since the party program has virtually scrapped public ownership, except for the steel industry).

This does not mean that there has been no progress in absolute terms. On the contrary, there has been constant improvement in living standards, thanks in part to a fall in the import prices of food and raw materials; taxes have come down in a most gratifying manner, and consumption has risen annually, as have wages and salaries. Even in 1958, when expansion was at a standstill, the populace consumed 5 per cent more in the way of imported food, drink, and tobacco. Exports fell, but the *value* (though not the volume) of imports declined more sharply, thus leaving a large financial surplus to be squandered. The only trouble with this agreeable picture is that it holds no guarantee of permanence. This is recognized in the latest official White Paper which comments that "in 1958 the United Kingdom's balance of payments was highly satisfactory. This was largely because external conditions were exceptionally favorable."

For a country whose level of employment depends in the most direct manner on its foreign trade, this conclusion holds a warning. It is not one that either the government or the official opposition has been anxious to impress upon the public. We are nearing a general election, and neither party is anxious to spoil the fun. This accounts for the Chancellor's latest Budget concessions; it also accounts for the opposition's muted dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs. The Labor party indeed is committed to a policy of expansion, and its leaders are vocally indignant about "Tory stagnation." They have not, however, so far made it clear where the emphasis is intended to lie. Theoretically, full employment can be secured in two ways: by stimulating home consumption (which means bigger imports of non-essentials), or by investing more in the basic industries, even if it means holding the standard of living down. One must be a considerable optimist to believe that Mr. Gaitskell and his colleagues are going to choose the latter course; or that, having chosen it, they will be able to impose it upon their party and the unions.

Against this background the political warfare falls into place. At the moment the two parties seem about level, though some indications favor the Conservatives if Mr. Macmillan can bring off a successful summit meeting. Alternatively, we shall be governed by Messrs. Gaitskell, Bevan, and Harold Wilson. No one pretends to believe that they are of the caliber of the 1945-51 Labor government, which was itself far from wonderful.

V

And so back to our domestic concerns, back to race relations and human relations, back in a sense to Aldermaston and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. For the annual protest march to our chief nuclear science laboratories is beginning to acquire the character of one of those movements which, though launched by outsiders, end by changing the whole tone of public

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opinion. There is even a film about it—*March to Aldermaston*—which has been running quite successfully at one of the major London cinemas. Its soundtrack seemed a bit disingenuous even to the sympathetic reviewer of the British Film Institute's highbrow quarterly magazine, *Sight and Sound*. Still, it will not do to suggest that the campaign has been taken over by the Communists: they are trying hard, unaware as usual that their success would kill the movement stone-dead. It is, however, more likely to continue along pacifist-neutralist lines, as did "disarmament" during the 1930's.

Some people affect surprise that the Communist party should go on existing at all. (It has just held another national congress and reported a recovery of membership strength to the pre-Hungarian level of 27,000, though the circulation of its daily suffered a further drop.) The fact is that the British CP has always been primarily an industrial organization. It continues to have some importance in the factories, and to be in control of at least one major union. Almost all the dissident intellectuals have now left (their organ, the *New Reasoner*, is quite readable and almost indistinguishable from a socialist publication), and some of the younger shop stewards, tired of the old gang but still "revolutionary," have joined the Trotskyists, who thus to their intense surprise find themselves in control of a sizable militant labor organization: something they had never dreamed would happen. But still the party carries on, though its leadership is aging, and the new recruits no longer come from the social and intellectual top-drawer. It will doubtless go on, just like any other sect. At the opposite end of the political spectrum, the remnants of Mosley's "Union Movement" have lately been active trying to stir the embers of race hatred (directed mainly against West Indian immigrants). An "independent" candidate of their persuasion, who last month tried to rouse the electors of a Norfolk farming constituency to the menace of "colored Bolshevism" (as represented by an assortment of bogeys ranging from Dr. Banda in Nyasaland to immigrants in Notting Hill), polled some 750 votes out of a total of 40,000. Not yet a major nuisance, but possibly a straw in the wind.

Closer to the center of public life, the group of up-to-date young Conservative politicians and intellectuals associated with *Crossbow* magazine have published a learned study suggesting that Britain can still play an important part in the world if the public is prepared to back a policy of economic expansion (a big "if"). Since this group includes some three dozen present or future Members of Parliament, and has the discreet blessing of the party high command, it deserves to be taken seriously. Its adherents are modern-minded and enlightened on all sorts of issues, from Keynesian economics to race relations and cultural censorship. In France they would support de Gaulle, in America they would probably be reckoned liberal Republicans, of the Rockefeller stripe. They may very well be the driving force of Toryism in the 1960's, the Old Guard leadership being disposed to favor them, as against the stupider back-benchers (who, however, are more popular with the local associations, especially the women). In dealing with British politics, one must never forget the existence of this element: this is a left-of-center country, and even the Conservative party goes on modernizing itself.

YET Africa is sure to put these rising young politicians to a severe test. I say "Africa" advisedly, since this is now the biggest issue in British politics, leaving the Bomb aside, as something that concerns NATO rather than Britain alone. Assuming that Central Europe can be neutralized, and that the Bomb can somehow be rendered harmless—no need to stress that these are earth-shaking assumptions—Africa is certain to dominate the scene, as India did for the Victorians. Not the Middle East: that has been quietly written off as hopeless. It is not without significance that the latest issue of one of our leading literary monthlies—a publication hitherto devoted largely to

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championship of Colonel Nasser (when not busy pleading the cause of the homosexuals) —has suddenly switched its attention to the Dark Continent: in a somewhat amateurish manner, but still with an evident straining after seriousness which is as welcome as it is surprising. For we have recently been through a rather stale and foolish period, partly occasioned by Suez shell-shock. There are signs that this mood is passing; elegant futility is no longer the mark of fashion, and even the London literary intellectuals have woken up to the existence of real problems. Against this faintly encouraging background, the detached observer can salute even the Aldermaston marchers, for all their obvious absurdity, as harbingers of a somewhat more bracing temper.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN THE YEAR 1952

YEHUDA AMIHAI

AROUND me my father built a huge care
like a shipyard
And then I went forth from it and I was
still unfinished
And he was left with his huge and empty
care.
And my mother—like a tree on the shore
between her arms stretched out after me.

And in the year '31 my hands were merry
and small
And in the year '41 they learned to use a
rifle
And when I loved my first love
My thoughts were like a burst of colored
balloons
And a pale girl's hand held them all
On a fine thread—and afterwards let them
fly.

And in the year '51 the movement of
my life
Was like the movement of many slaves
rowing a galley
And my father's face was like a lantern at
the end of the receding train,
And my mother shut up all the many clouds
in her brown wardrobe.
And I climbed to the top of my street,
With the 20th century the blood in my
veins,
Blood that wanted to run out in many wars,
Through many openings,
And therefore it beats on my head from
within
And reaches the heart in angry waves.

But now, in the spring of '52, I see
That more birds came back than left last
winter.
And I return down the hillside to my house
And in my room the woman, and her body
is heavy
And full of time.

YEHUDA AMIHAI is considered to be Israel's leading poet. A sonnet by him appeared in our December 1956 number, and his work was discussed at length by Meir Mindlin in a recent article on "The Israeli Scene" (March). The present poem was translated from the Hebrew by M. Benaya, author of the Israeli novel The Levelling Wind (Pantheon).

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THE LIMITS OF "PEOPLE-CENTERED" JUDAISM

The Course of the American Synagogue

JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKI

MODERN writers on Judaism are fond of quoting the saying, "God, the Torah, and Israel are one"—apparently in the conviction that it is an ancient Jewish teaching. The fact that the saying goes back to nothing more ancient than Israel Ba'al Shem Tov's paraphrase of a passage in the Zohar, and that in its context it means no more than that the individual Jew, by studying the Torah, can achieve communion with God (see "God, the Torah, and Israel," Cedars of Lebanon, COMMENTARY, January 1958), has not deterred people from using it as a slogan in modern programmatic statements on Judaism and Jewish life. Thus it has been argued that the three constituent elements—God, the Torah, and Israel—are of equal value. If, moreover, "Torah" is understood as Jewish culture and "Israel" as modern Jewish nationalism, then it would follow that the non-religious Zionist Jew still upholds two-thirds of the totality of Judaism, the "Torah" and "Israel"—while the anti-Zionist Jew, who claims that Judaism is a matter of religion and nothing but religion, remains less of a Jew by one-third. Clearly, the formula serves the modern secularist as a psychological bridge to help him overcome the gulf separating him from the God- and Torah-centered heritage of his ancestors. It is therefore not sruprising that the saying is invoked more often by those who have departed from the traditional belief in God, and who understand Torah in terms of culture and folkways, than by those who take their "Jewishness" for granted just because of their theological commitments and their pietistic observances.

The secular State of Israel on the one hand, and the American citizen of Jewish faith on the other, are equally unprecedented in the history and tradition of pre-Emancipation Judaism. The Judaism of those times was both a theocentric view of life, and a Torah-centered way of life; that view of life was upheld and that way of life was practised by a distinctive group which often enjoyed a considerable amount of autonomy. It is therefore quite possible for both the non-religious nationalist and the anti-Zionist religionist to claim that they represent the main tendency of past Jewish development—though neither, if he is honest, would conceal the fact that he is taking a selective view of that development.

In fact, however, the early teachers of Judaism did not glibly subscribe to some formula that asserted the equal value of "religion" and "peoplehood." On the contrary, they actually debated on occasion which of the two was more important. The problem was put as follows, in the language of those days: Does the Torah exist for the sake of Israel, or does Israel exist for the sake of the Torah? Both views found their protagonists.

In another formulation of the problem, the ancient rabbis acknowledged three types of Prophets. There was the Prophet concerned only with the claims of God. Elijah was such a prophet: he described himself as having been "exceedingly zealous for the

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IN RECENT decades the concept of Jewish peoplehood has not only dominated Jewish secular and nationalist movements, but has taken almost as important a place in the institutional Judaism of our day. So much so, that many have seen modern Judaism as "people-centered." JAKOB J. PETUCHOWSKI here describes how this came about, and indicates why the accent is likely to shift again in the near future. Dr. Petuchowski is assistant professor of Rabbinics at Hebrew Union College. His most recent COMMENTARY article "The Bible of the Synagogue" (February 1959) evoked wide comment.

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Lord, the God of hosts," and in his great zeal he found himself playing the role of an accuser of Israel before God. Then there was the Prophet who was zealous only for Israel's glory. Jonah was this kind of prophet: out of a sense of Israelite patriotism he was moved to ignore God's own command. The third type is represented by Jeremiah, who was equally zealous for both God and Israel. Recognizing the justice of God's punishment meted out to the sinful people, he yet numbered himself among the sinners and remonstrated with God about the delay of the divine forgiveness.

This early midrash (*Mekilta Bo*, ed. Friedmann, p. 2a) leaves us in no doubt that the type generally preferred by the early rabbis was that of Jeremiah—in this instance, as in so many others, the rabbis evaded an either/or choice by saying "both!"

Today, the modern American Jew is unable to echo this "both" with much conviction, even though he may be affiliated with institutional Jewish religion. The question frequently encountered in Jewish jokes, "Is it good for the Jews?" is no longer asked only of such things as the theory of relativity, or the breaking of the sound barrier—it is now being asked of Judaism itself.

MODERN American Judaism, like American religion in general, no longer operates with the autonomous demands of religion, with "Thus saith the Lord." Instead, American religion—Judaism included—is offered as a commodity which its purveyors seek to make appealing to the customer. Religion is good for you. It helps you to overcome psychological difficulties. It prevents juvenile delinquency. It is a bulwark against Communism. The family that prays together stays together. In short, you miss out on much of the fun of life if you don't affiliate with the church of your choice.

Man, in other words, is not so much a servant of God, as religion is a commodity of service to man. That a good case can be made out for this position goes without saying. Nineteenth-century liberalism, the Social Gospel of the earlier decades of this century, and the pervasive secularism in American thought have all had something to do with shaping this conception of religion. But by and large, it seems more indebted to the widespread, unreflective pragmatism so characteristic of much of American life at its ordinary levels, than to the conscious, thoughtful acceptance of a particular conception of religion.

The result, in any case, is the same: man accepts religion because religion serves his needs. The highest court of appeal is man himself. (This description, let me say in passing, is not intended as the last word on American religion. At the same time that religion has this vast, popular, purely pragmatic appeal, leading theologians of the country are rediscovering and reformulating such theocentric concepts as Revelation, Judgment, and the Word. It takes time, however, for the concerns of the theologians to reach the pulpit and the pew.)

Judaism is not only good for the individual Jew, according to the modern American view, it is good also for the Jews as a *group*. Its beliefs unite the Jewish group more closely; its practices have "survival" value. Thus in addition to all the benefits Judaism is said to bestow upon the individual Jew, it is also indispensable to the Jewish *people* —if it wishes to survive as such. And more often than not, the "survival of the Jewish people" (with all the ambiguities inherent in the two nouns and in the adjective) is taken as axiomatic, something that needs no further justification.

In Dr. Mordecai M. Kaplan's "Reconstructionism," these things are frankly stated, and incorporated in the structure of his system. But the "survival" rationale has become part of other modern formulations of Judaism as well. It is given a respectable place in the program of Conservative Judaism; and even Orthodox spokesmen have been known to justify ritual observances in terms of "group survival," thus bypassing vexing questions about the nature and content of Divine Revelation.

But perhaps the most eloquent illustration of how the stress on Jewish "peoplehood"

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has come to the fore in modern Judaism, and how "survival value" has taken the place of earlier justifications for religious observance, can be found in certain significant changes which the Reform movement has undergone within the last two or three decades. Reform Judaism and Zionism are no longer, as they were at one time, antithetical concepts and movements. Reform has enlarged the accepted categories of "religious pageantry" and "symbolism" to include "folkways" and Israeli dances. The same rabbinical body that still listens seriously to suggestions for the abolition of the last days of Passover and Succoth, also numbers in its ranks those who would sponsor the observance of Israel Arbor Day and Israel Independence Day as significant festivals for the American Jew. The movement which long ago declared that the traditional dietary laws were of no further religious significance, now provides its membership with *latke* recipes on Chanukah and *hamantashen* recipes on Purim. And in its *Guiding Principles,* published in 1957, it defines Judaism as "the historical religious experience of the Jewish people," and as "the soul of which Israel is the body." Reform even recognizes, if somewhat grudgingly, "in the group-loyalty of Jews who have become estranged from our religious tradition a bond which still unites them with us."

RECENT events in Jewish history undoubtedly had their share in bringing about this change of attitude in Reform Judaism, as did the influx into the ranks of Reform of Jews from East European backgrounds. Yet there is more to it than this. It is quite possible that the stress currently placed on Jewish "peoplehood" is necessary in order to maintain the very structure of Reform Judaism itself. For Reform at its very inception contained a number of unresolved paradoxes which threatened to bring about the dissolution of the whole system.

With a thoroughgoing Teutonic logic—well described in Nathan Glazer's recent book, *American Judaism*—Reform, in its endeavor to be "rational," proceeded to banish every element of the "irrational" from Judaism. Even the idea of the Deity retained precious little of the "numinous." But the moment you make your commitment to God dependent upon the outcome of your reasoning, there is at least a tacit admission that it is possible for your reasoning to take a different course and lead you to an entirely different destination. If you insist that *everything* in religion is meant to serve ethical needs, it will not be long before upholders of an ethical way of life start claiming that they can have their ethics without the religion. Felix Adler with his Ethical Culture Movement is a case in point.

If you maintain that, though the Jews have been entrusted with a "mission," the emphasis ought to be on what all men have in common rather than on the inherited "particularisms," the time will come when Reform rabbis like Schindler and Fleischer in Boston discover that they can serve humanity better without the "mission" and without Judaism. If you deny the relevance of traditional *halachah* (the life-regimen of Torah law) and make religious observance dependent on the taste of the individual, the very factors which made Israel of old a *religious* community rather than a secular nation will have been cast aside.

If you sermonize at length on how the ancient Prophets fulminated against Temple worship in Jerusalem and in Beth-El, one day your congregation will begin to wonder how important Temple worship in New York or in Cincinnati can be in the sight of God. And why have religious services at all, if God is best worshipped in the heart of man and served by the moral deed?

All of these paradoxes might sooner or later have brought about the internal collapse of Reform Judaism as an institutional religion. But in the nick of time Reform Judaism discovered Jewish "peoplehood." After Revelation and *halachah* had fallen victim to the grinding mills of Reform dialectics, "peoplehood" came along to hold the Reform movement together.

Here, then, is the biggest paradox of

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them all. Reform Judaism, which began by stressing the religious aspect of Judaism to the exclusion of everything else, has been led by the logic of its own liberalism to such a degree of anarchy in belief and practice that its own institutional survival is now dependent upon the rediscovery of the "peoplehood" of Israel! Reform rabbis who cannot agree among themselves whether God is a Person or not, who hold the most diverse views on the efficacy of prayer, and who adhere with ever fainter heart to the "classical" Reform doctrine of the "Mission of Israel," with its corollary of "Israel as the Priest People of God"—these same Reform rabbis can at least agree on this, that they are serving the Jewish People!

This service takes the form of ministering to the psychological well-being of the individual synagogue member (which thus brings Reform into the pattern of American religion in general), and helping to assure the survival of the Jewish people.

THE paradox is heightened even more when we regard that minority in the ranks of Reform which rejects out of hand the contemporary emphasis on Jewish "peoplehood." At last year's annual convention of the American Council for Judaism, Henry Hurwitz, the editor of the *Menorah Journal*, was featured as one of the main speakers. The burden of Hurwitz's address, to which the official publication of the American Council seemed to take no exception, concerned the need for an even more pronounced universalism, and for a frank humanist approach to the traditional teachings of Judaism. This theme was elaborated at greater length in one of Hurwitz's own editorials in the *Menorah Journal*. Speaking of the various "spheres" which are to be rejected, such as the nationalist sphere and the folkist sphere, Hurwitz also mentions the theological sphere as the one to be superseded by a new humanist re-interpretation of Judaism.

Should the American Council for Judaism adopt such a program, it would involve itself in a profound self-contradiction. For if the *religious* content of Judaism is the only justification for *Jewish* existence, and if even an innocent reference to the "Jewish people" in an occasional Sunday School textbook is deemed objectionable—if such is the case, and if a group of Jews then goes on to adopt a humanist instead of a theological program, it proclaims to the world that its "Jewishness" is due to the *ethnic* origin of its members rather than to any theological convictions championed by Judaism as a religion. True humanism, after all, has no need of, indeed rejects, such restrictive qualifications as "Jewish"; the continued existence of the American Council for Judaism, if it were to preach such a humanism, would turn out to be but a mere attenuated version of Jewish "folkism."

From all that has been said thus far, it would seem to follow that the only Jew who could afford to ignore the current emphasis on "peoplehood" would be the convinced and consistent Orthodox Jew, who takes his Judaism as something revealed "from above" rather than evolved in the historical life-situation of a *people*. (The current debate between Mr. Ben Gurion and the Orthodox Rabbinate on the question of "who is a Jew" may not be unrelated to these considerations.) All other manifestations of modern Judaism, insofar as they depart from this central Orthodox dogma, are forced sooner or later to make room in their systems for an emphasis on "peoplehood," and for a faith that is, at least to some extent, "people-centered."

This analysis need not necessarily lend support to the Jewish nationalist who has all along maintained that the Jewish religion was merely an instrument for holding the Jewish nation together in its exile, until, with the Return to the Homeland, the religious institutions of Judaism will have lost their practical value. In the first place, "peoplehood" is a rather vague concept, and there is no *a priori* need to identify it with the concept of "nationhood" which is basic to the classical Zionist idea. But even if we grant the claim, which will be very hard to refute, that the Jewish religion has been

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instrumental in preserving the Jewish people, it by no means follows that preservation of the "people" must perforce be the highest aim which it has been Judaism's destiny to serve. On the contrary, the argument can be turned right around. Once we say that no religion can be realized in a vacuum; that Judaism, in order to take shape and maintain itself, needed (to borrow Professor Samuel S. Cohon's apt classifications) not only a creed, a cult, and a code of conduct, but also a *community*, it follows that, for the survival of Judaism, the survival of the Jewish people becomes a *conditio sine qua non*. In this view, the nationalist who sees mere Jewish survival as an end in itself is simply afflicted with spiritual short-sightedness. The religious Jew, on the other hand, who sees in Judaism itself the rationale for Jewish survival, can give the concrete reality of "peoplehood" its due, and still regard it as but a means to a higher end.

Seen in this larger perspective, there may be some permanent value in the contemporary emphasis on "people-centered" Judaism. This value may prove able to survive the inevitable weakening of the American Jew's intense emotional identification with what is going on in the State of Israel.

As I remarked some time ago in these pages,* after all the definitions have been argued and re-argued, it remains the case that "the Jewish community is . . . what Jewish peoplehood has come to mean for the vast majority of American Jews, whether they realize it or not." And Will Herberg has shown that this Jewish community is increasingly being viewed (both from without and from within) as the Jewish counterpart to the Protestant and Catholic varieties of American religion. If this is so, it will become more and more difficult to maintain American Jewish life on the basis of a *secular* emphasis on Jewish "peoplehood." If Judaism does not primarily signify the Jewish *religion*, American Jews will be hard put to it to evade the alternative posed some years ago by Arthur Koestler: If you are a national Jew, your place is in the State of Israel. If you are not; if, in other words, you want to stay here, then you have no right to impose the burden of Jewishness on your children. In that case you should assimilate consciously and completely. Obviously Koestler did not reckon with a religious Judaism as a live option. Those, however, who have not written off religious Judaism as a dead loss recognize in it a *tertium quid* to be opposed to Koestler's alternatives.

We may discount in this context the attempt to preserve the Jews as a distinctive "cultural" group. What passes for "Jewish culture" usually turns out, on closer inspection, to be nothing more than the particular culture of East European Jews. But this culture was not shared by their brethren west of the Oder river, nor would Yemenite or North African Jews feel at home in it. After all, it was the founder of political Zionism, Theodor Herzl himself, who wrote in *The Jewish State*: "It is only by the faith of our fathers that we recognize our historic community, for we have long since indelibly absorbed the languages of the various nations."

The very "people-centeredness" which has been characteristic of recent Jewish thought in America forces us, in the final analysis, to look for the people's *raison d'être* in the *religious* values of the Jewish heritage. Even the Jewish secularist in suburbia has been reduced to registering his children at the synagogue Sunday School, in order to maintain his identification with the Jewish community. This in itself may be of little significance. On the other hand, it may be only a matter of time until the wheel turns full circle. And then we shall be back at a God- and Torah-centered interpretation of Jewish life in the Diaspora—however "modified" it may turn out to be in terms of present-day Orthodoxy.

Again, what is happening in American religion in general provides an apt parallel to developments in the American Jewish community. The trend in American Chris-

*"Jewish Mission to the Nations," October 1955.

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tianity over the last half century or so was also away from the traditional dogmatic formulations toward more rationalistic and humanistic concerns. Theological hair-splitting gave way to psychological concern and pastoral counselling. But a movement in the opposite direction is already in evidence. The very concern with the psychological needs of the individual church member led to a rediscovery of the traditional Christian doctrines of sin and atonement, and of the limitations of secular utopianism. It is no longer considered old-fashioned in Christian circles to be interested in the problem of "Christ and Culture," or in the dichotomy between "the Word of God and the Word of Man." No one, however, wishes or expects that the resurgence of these more pronounced *theological* trends in American Protestantism will result in a lack of interest in "people," and in a neglect of the counselling role on the part of the ministry. These things have come to stay, even if the major emphasis of religion is in the process of shifting.

No doubt we can expect much the same thing to happen with "people-centered" Judaism. The nationalist overtone may be expected to disappear sooner or later. The frequent disagreements between Ben Gurion and the American Zionists over the question of whether America is "exile" or not, and on the need for large-scale immigration of Jews to Israel from the United States; the feverish search for a rationale to prop up the whole Zionist apparatus, and the constant process of "re-defining" the aims and objects of Zionism for American Jewish consumption—all this may be taken as evidence that the heyday of Jewish nationalism in the United States is past, that the State of Israel and the American Jewish community will ultimately have to go their separate ways. When they do, Jews who reject Koestler's alternatives will do so precisely because they see a supreme value in *religious* Judaism. But it will not be possible ever again to ignore the *community* aspect of Judaism, now that it has come to the fore.

Judaism, after all, is not something thin and abstract which can exist apart from the concrete and mundane existence of the Jews. An old midrash put this idea in a daring way: "Before the time of Abraham, God was, as it were, King of the Heavens only. But when Abraham came, he proclaimed God's kingship over earth and heaven alike." (*Sifré* to Deuteronomy, paragraph 313, ed. Friedmann p. 134b). And yet Abraham was only the beginning.

One of the major differences between Judaism and Christianity, which James Parkes has written about so perceptively, is just this: that, while Christianity addresses itself to the "saved" individual, the Sinaitic Law is addressed to the *community*. The community is that "kingdom of priests and holy people" (Ex. 19:6) in which alone Judaism can be lived and realized. To take some down-to-earth examples: Judaism values public worship above the prayer of the individual, and public worship requires a *minyan* (quorum) of ten. Learning, often described as equal in value to all the other commandments, is understood in Judaism as a group activity. Such *rites de passage* as circumcision, marriage, and burial, though related to the status of the individual, become valid only in the presence of a *minyan*. Needless to say, implementation of the Torah's social legislation is scarcely compatible with a hermit's existence.

Just how important the "community" has been to Judaism may be seen from the following paragraph of the Code of Maimonides: "He who withdraws from the ways of the community, even though he does not commit any transgressions, but merely separates himself from the congregation of Israel, and performs the commandments not in their midst, and does not enter into their sorrow nor fast on their fast-days . . . such a one has no share in the Hereafter" (*Hilkhoth Teshubhah* 3:11). Yet Maimonides wrote his Code, as Solomon Zeitlin has shown, with a view to having it accepted as the constitution of the Messianic State, for the time, that is to say, when the City of God and the City of Men would be co-extensive.

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And although the particular paragraph we have quoted was meant to refer to Maimonides' own time, too, the modern reader is struck by the fact that Maimonides could still take the regimen of commandments (*mitzvot*) so much for granted as to credit the "marginal" deficient Jew of his day with the performance of the *mitzvot* in the privacy of his own home. In the time of Maimonides, and for centuries thereafter, the universal acceptance of Jewish Law, even more than the identity of shared beliefs, and certainly more than any "organizational" aspects of Jewish life, made the Jews in all corners of their dispersion members of a "holy community."

None of this applies to modern Jewish life. In the West, the absolute rule of Jewish Law began to break down with the Emancipation. The Reformers may welcome this. The Conservatives, by compromising, may attempt to stem the tide. The Orthodox may wish to exempt their own constituents from this fact; but even they have tacitly given up a full fourth of the standard code of the *Shulchan Aruch*: namely, that part of it which deals with civil law. The Reformers began by shifting the emphasis from the practical observance of *mitzvot* to the theological convictions of the individual. It was, in its time, a very necessary shift. The milieu which had hitherto served as a guarantor for the continuity of Judaism was breaking up, and the Jewish individual had to equip himself to step forth into the wider world and yet remain a Jew. But the result of this, as we have already seen, if not at first then at least in the present century, has been such a complete anarchy that until the present day the Reformers have been unable to establish a *theological* foundation for such observances as they do continue to recommend and practise.

Of "community," on the other hand, at least in its external aspects, there has been no lack. Quite apart from the *kehillah*-type of organization, which was customary in Europe, and which the Reconstructionists are trying to revive on American soil, the most striking aspect even of present-day American Jewish life is the multiplicity of its communal organization. If anything, American Judaism is over-organized. But whereas in the past the essential communal unit was the local *minyan*, the active local congregation, American Jewry has projected its "community" onto the national scale. It takes a great deal of stretching of terms to recognize in the national organizations of American Judaism, in its religious "denominations" as well as in its charities, the "holy community" in which Judaism was traditionally lived and realized.

IN SPITE of all this organization, what real Judaism there remains is the Judaism of committed *individuals*, "one of a city, and two of a family" (Jer. 3:14). This Jewish commitment is something which our "denominations" cannot dictate, and which Madison Avenue methods cannot promote. But just because it is, today, something so individual and so personal, it lacks just that "community" aspect which a full Judaism requires for its realization. And yet, paradoxically enough, those few committed individuals, in their aggregate, *are* the "holy community" as far as the American Jewish scene is concerned—they, and not the five and a half million who figure in the statistics.

It may not be very realistic to hope for the time when the few and the many shall become identical. But after all, it has happened before. The Pharisees of old, gathered in their exclusive "brotherhoods" (*habhuroth*), apparently believed that the high degree of pietistic observance which they cultivated was beyond the reach of the ordinary Israelite. In time, however, "Pharisaic Judaism" became the religion of the people as a whole.* This kind of development, however, must lead from the individual to the group, and not *vice versa*. Mordecai Kaplan therefore seems to me to be putting the cart before the horse when he puts his faith in a "covenant for world Jewry," to be reenacted by the representatives of world Jewry

*See my article, "The Pharisaic Tradition Today," February 1956.

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as the starting-point for the reconstitution of modern Jewish life. Surely the individual commitment should come first—before we dare think in national, let alone international, terms.

THE need of the hour is definitely for more, many more, committed Jewish *individuals*. And what will they be like? I foresee men and women who have begun to question the *meaning* of their Jewish origin, who are groping to find their way back to the "God of the fathers," who are able and willing to see, beneath the legendary layers deposited by millennia of piety, the *reality* of God's Covenant with Israel, and the obligation which rests upon every individual Jew to strain his ear for the Word of God addressed to him personally.

They will not all share the same beliefs, nor will they necessarily accept for themselves as personal obligations the same provisions of the old Law. But they will be united in their earnestness and in their search. They will accept a personal confrontation with the totality of the Jewish heritage as their task, one which no single individual can any longer accomplish by himself. They will not necessarily be guided by what previous generations have accepted or rejected; rather they will regard themselves as standing at Sinai anew—at that Sinai where, according to the ancient Sages, everybody understood the Word of God according to his own ability. In short, they will be the kind of people who engage in that "New Learning" about which Franz Rosenzweig spoke, and who seek to find their way from the periphery back to the center of Judaism.

The very nature of their endeavor will force them to work together, to congregate in study circles—and who knows but that they who have come to study may stay to pray and to practise? They will be the ones who will set the tone for the contemporary understanding of that most elusive term, "Judaism." And, whether conscious of it at the beginning of their enterprise or not, they will soon learn that Judaism can be lived only in the "community," that the "Covenant" presupposes the "Covenant People"—though nothing may be further from their minds, as they embark on their search, than the thought that *they* are the "holy community."

It is too early to say whether they will be more than this, whether they will in fact prove to be the nucleus around which the whole of American Jewry may yet group itself. The late Milton Steinberg, in *A Believing Jew*, spoke of the right not to be a Jew," which is "one of the privileges which have come to us as persons born in our age." If anti-Semitism continues to decline and external circumstances facilitate the process of assimilation, it can be anticipated that many of today's "marginal" Jews will avail themselves of this "right." *Sub specie aeternitatis*, this may entail no real loss to Judaism, which has never measured its strength in numbers. It is also likely, indeed it would almost seem to be a postulate, that the perspective of Jewish life will have to revert from the "coast-to-coast" range—let alone the orientation to the State of Israel—back to the level of the local congregation, in which the individual Jew has his real being.

But the fact remains that, though we have to begin with the individual, the very commitment to a *religious* Judaism will be seen to imply the "community" aspect, the living in, and the preservation of, the "holy community." Such may well be the lasting contribution of that phase of modern American Judaism which we have described as "people-centered."

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RETURN TO POLAND

Pages from a Diary

MAIUS BERGMAN

GLANCING through the diary which I kept during my three-week stay in Poland last autumn, I keep returning to those pages which describe the young people I met, talked and argued with for hours without end in my hotel, in sundry *kawiarnias* (cafés), in untidy apartments, on the streets, in busses and in streetcars. Against the drab Polish landscape—ramshackle buildings huddling alongside the gingerbread Palace of Culture, charred ruins and empty spaces overgrown with weeds, peasant women in their shapeless clothing selling wormy-looking, though surprisingly tasty pears and plums ("A marvellous season, this," I was told, "we haven't had much fruit since before the war . . ."), drunks lurching through the streets at noontime, and the tense, exhausted faces of the ordinary Poles—these youths, mostly in their late twenties and thirties, stood out, refreshingly, with their vitality, intellectual curiosity, and dogged hope in the future.

The hope, after all the cruel disappointments of both Stalinism and its aftermath, was often enough purely personal—for a successful career, a more lucrative job, or perhaps an opportunity to build one's life in the West. The West, of course, is an unceasing object of interest, wonder, and envy. "Tell me something about new literary or philosophical trends in the United States," said a young music student to me. "In spite of all the information we get here, we're still terribly uninformed." The scene was a huge hall in a makeshift wooden building, across the street from the Palace of Culture, belonging to the Student Association of the Warsaw Polytechnic Institute, called the *Stodola* (barn). The "barn" was filled with intense students dancing to the strains of an excellent Dixieland band. It was my second evening in Warsaw, and I was sitting with a Western journalist, his wife, and two Polish students at a table laden with bottles of warm, sweetish beer and equally tasteless soft drinks. The din around us was deafening, yet the conversation at the table, though spasmodic, never declined into small talk.

I decided to tell the music student about the "beat generation," the *Evergreen Review*, San Francisco, and he listened with furrowed brow. The other student, evidently a born leader, nervous, high-strung (it was he who had brought us there in the first place, steering us through throngs of curious faces, dropping little phrases such as "gentlemen of the press," "make way for representatives from the United States," to the accompaniment of finger-snapping and imperious gestures), had little patience for purely intellectual subjects. It was politics that he wanted to talk about. A scion of an old land-owning family of pre-war Poland, partly German and 100 per cent Catholic, he loudly informed us almost at the outset that he despised Communism, and that the vast majority of Poles felt likewise. "You know," he told me later in the evening, "the authorities are aware of my anti-Communist views, but they want me to help organize a Marxist discussion group at the Polytechnic Institute. I'll go along—why not? But the group won't be very Marxist," he added, with a twinkle in his eye. "You see, they no longer forbid us to listen to jazz—they're not as stupid as they used to be before 1955-56. But they still want to impose their political program on us—oh,

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not so blatantly as before, but just as tenaciously." In the meantime, he told me, only thirty-five out of a total of several thousand students at the Institute chose to join the Union of Socialist Youth, the successor to the Stalinist youth organization that disintegrated in October 1956. "Not a bad record, eh?"

At 10:30 the *Stodola* closed, my Western friends went home, and the two Polish students suggested that we see some of Warsaw's night sights. The streets around the Palace of Culture were swarming with wretched-looking prostitutes, and my Catholic acquaintance pointed to them as living proof of the bestiality of the Communist system. When I tried to tell him that other cities in Europe—notably Paris—have their share of street-walkers, he was shocked, and almost pleaded with me: "Surely they're not as bad as these women, are they? Why, you won't find a single good-looking woman among our prostitutes!" He may have been right, yet I could not help reflecting, with sad amusement, on the peculiar price that the Poles have had to pay for their years of isolation.

We went on, through dimly lit streets, passing the windows of the many small shops that have sprung up in the past two years as a result of the government's more tolerant attitude toward private enterprise, inspecting the eclectic and sorry-looking items on display (a bottle of French eau de cologne, a dacron-cotton shirt, an American fountain pen, a Swedish salad bowl), all the while continuing our haphazard conversation—I asking and probing, the students replying, passionately, unequivocally. "Haven't things changed since October," I asked, "haven't things become better?" "Oh yes, things certainly did change—at first. But now we're going back to where we were before. All that you see now is just for appearance's sake—*na pozor*."

The two students then began to enumerate all the reforms that Gomulka had promised but which were turning out to be so much propaganda: freedom of speech, economic improvement, less subservient relations with Russia, full coexistence with the Church. As I was to learn later, the extreme bitterness of my young friends was not fully justified. Yet it was symptomatic—as was their boldness, their scorn of the police ("What can they do to us? Besides, we're not afraid of them any more"), and their bravura ("Who knows what the future will bring? We don't necessarily have to live in Poland for the rest of our lives. . . . Perhaps there will be an excursion abroad—need we say more?"—and a meaningful glance, wistful and defiant at the same time).

AMONG the scores of young people I met in Poland, these two students were unique in the extent of their rejection of the system under which they lived, but the malaise of disillusionment has infected them all. It has not, however, succeeded in turning them completely inward, for "internal emigration" is a by-product of a fully developed totalitarian society and Gomulka's Poland is hardly that. The disillusionment and bitterness are felt toward *politics*, toward long and short-range "programs," specious optimism, ideology and slogans, and even toward "revisionism" (as a coherent school of thought)—that dynamic and spontaneous movement of liberation from stultifying dogma which swept Eastern Europe in the wake of Khrushchev's "secret speech" on Stalin in 1956, and which, though emasculated, still haunts the Kremlin today, as "Trotskyism" did in the 1930's and "Titoism" in the late 40's and early 50's. The men who became the most rabid "revisionists" in 1956-57, were the same ones (by and large) who only a few years earlier had been the chief spokesmen for intransigent Stalinism —who had demanded that *Klassenkampf* be waged in the universities as well as in the countryside, and whose faith in the ultimate "correctness" of Marxism drove them to acts of ruthless fanaticism. In 1954-56, during the first stage of the "thaw," they went through the torment of learning the truth about Polish and Soviet reality. For most of these young people the "crisis of conscience" —the break (*przelom*)—was a profound, in-

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tensely genuine experience.* It impelled them, at the end, to turn with as much moral vehemence *against* the system as they had exhibited earlier in defending it. These were the young people who grouped around *Po Prostu,* the revolutionary paper that for three years—until its forced closing by Gomulka in the summer of 1957—carried on an uninhibited struggle aganist bureaucratism, mismanagement, corruption, party authoritarianism, and legal terror. In the months preceding Gomulka's return to power, they negotiated with him informally and helped to pave the way for his return by waging a bitter battle against the *Natolin* group (Stalinists) in the party, as well as by spreading revolutionary propaganda among workers (particularly in the Zeran factory in Warsaw who in turn gave Gomulka the massive support that enabled him to stand up to the threats of Khrushchev et al. They were the type of enthusiasts whom every revolution employs—and then discards when order and discipline replace fervor and idealism.

And so the young Polish revisionists were discarded, too, by the very man whom they helped to bring to power. They were discarded because Gomulka was never the type of revisionist they (and many people abroad) so desperately wished him to be. He had always been a unique combination of Polish patriot and Communist of the Leninist persuasion, a firm believer in the rule of the "proletariat" as represented by its "vanguard," the Communist party; impatient with doctrinal niceties unrelated to considerations of strategy and power; suspicious of intellectuals; single-minded, pragmatic, and humorless. Gomulka let the eager "liberals" talk for a while; then he clipped their wings; and finally he had them silenced altogether.†

The young revisionists I met were thus quietly resigned, and even contemptuous of what they now regard as their former naivety. "Thank God I have been cured of politics once and for all," one said to me. "As long as I live I won't stick my nose in that again." Did he regret the role he had played in 1955-57?, I asked him. No, he did not; it was "historically necessary and justifiable," he told me, but at the same time doomed to failure. "Why, you know," he added with the merest trace of a smile, "I have just gone through some of the voluminous revisionist writings of that period, and have come to the conclusion that most of those writers didn't even know how to write."

Another ex-revisionist, now a moderate Gomulkaist, spoke sadly of *Po Prostu's* habit of sending out unqualified young people to study specific economic or political abuses and then publishing their "exposés," which would create a furor yet offered little in the way of constructive suggestion. And what of the future, I asked still another, a well-known writer whose decision to quit the party became a *cause célèbre* at that time. "Nothing," was his reply. "All we can do is wait."

THESE pleasant, gifted, articulate young men and women were forever ready to "explain conditions in our country," to provide the inquisitive foreigner with facts, figures, anecdotes, apocryphal stories, and apposite jokes. A young actress spoke at length about wages and social benefits; a young architect plied me with statistics on

*But not for all. Poland today is full of people who speak with horror about the crimes of the past (ironically referred to as "the period of errors and distortions") and profess a devotion to the basic ideas of a new, reformed, "liberalized" Communism (or socialism). Yet how many of them were themselves guilty of those crimes? Western observers are often impressed by this collective soul-searching, yet they would do well to remember that for many this is merely a new form of political conformism. A play by a young Polish satirist, Slawomir Mrozek, called *Policemen,* which has enjoyed a long run in one of Warsaw's theaters and which constitutes a hilarious assault on the police state, has its chief character passionately proclaim at one point "But I had a *przelom*!" At this point the audience titters.

†While the back of "revisionism" *as an ideological movement* has also been broken among non-party intellectuals, non-conformity still continues to flourish among them. A good example is the recent meeting of the Polish Writers' Union which passed a resolution protesting excessive press censorship, thus earning for itself the official condemnation of the party. Nor do I mean to say that individual revisionists no longer exist within the party; they do, but they no longer represent an organized force.

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labor productivity; another actor spoke about current economic policies; a journalist specializing in international affairs discoursed on the Polish theater; a sociologist-*cum*-archaeologist entertained me with stories about party corruption; a young woman psychologist drew me into a long discussion about the Rapacki plan for gradual disengagement in Central Europe. The discussions were invariably lively and sharp, yet they always seemed to bog down when one of Gomulka's policies came up. Bitter about the "Stalinist" past, nostalgic about the "thaw," unhappy about present trends, and apprehensive about the future, they nevertheless were unable to provide any alternative solutions, even in theory. It seemed, indeed, as if they had given up the struggle—as if they had accepted not only Gomulka's program, but his rationalization (formerly stated openly and now only admitted in private) that all the unpopular policies were forced on him by his "neighbor to the East," and that the Polish nation must endure them, lest what remained of its independence be crushed by Soviet tanks.

Things were getting worse and worse, I was told. Press censorship was tightening. You could never write as you pleased, of course, but the relative intellectual freedom that Poland enjoyed just before and after the October 1956 upheaval was a thing of the past. Workers' councils which sprang up in 1956 and which hoped to play a leading role in a new, decentralized economy had been virtually abolished. Strikes were no longer tolerated. Private initiative was again being throttled. Corruption and graft were still rampant. Frank public discussion of Poland's relations with Russia was no longer possible.

Yet how could it be otherwise? What alternatives did Gomulka have at his disposal? There was Russia, to begin with—*above all,* there was Russia. There was the heritage of twenty years of war, occupation, and Stalinist terror and mismanagement. Workers' councils were a fine institution; the right to strike could not be questioned. But what if the workers were undisciplined, unwilling to work and—when left to themselves—apt to elect only incompetents and malcontents to the councils? And what about the party, eroded by careerism, devoid of any ideological élan? ("Are there any ideologically motivated people still in the party?" I would ask, and the invariable reply was either a derisive chuckle or a shrug and a cryptic "perhaps 5 per cent . . . but they don't count any longer.") "You know," a young sociologist said to me, "the 'verification campaign' [purge] is over now and they say it was a great success. But it makes me laugh! They expelled about 15 per cent of the membership, but they just got rid of the scum—petty criminals, people who long ago stopped paying their dues, outright scoundrels and opportunists—because they know that a real purge would get rid of about 90 per cent. There are a lot of funny stories circulating in Warsaw these days. There is one about an elderly woman-member, a kind of Old Bolshevik, about whom it was discovered that she went to church every Sunday and kept a crucifix over her bed. When they brought charges against her, she produced a personal letter from Lenin and threatened to write Moscow that Gomulka was persecuting Old Bolsheviks! No one seems to know how she ever got Lenin to write to her, but it's a fact. They had to drop the charges, of course. That's the kind of a party we have here in Poland," he concluded, with undisguised relish.

I TRIED to question my informants about Gomulka's ideological convictions, his need to rely upon Russia not only because opposition would invite another blood bath à la Hungary, but also because he is a convinced Communist and realizes that the Kremlin is the only guarantee for keeping the Polish Communist party in power. My friends vaguely agreed. They were no longer fervent Gomulkaists, they no longer saw him as the man who would deliver them from all their miseries, but they kept coming back to the "objective reasons," to Soviet pressure." I probed further. If it was indeed true, as they said, that the "unwritten agree-

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ment" between Gomulka and Khrushchev obligated Poland to accept Soviet "leadership" within the Communist bloc and in the conduct of foreign policy in general, while leaving her free to follow her own road in domestic matters, how could every single internal retreat from the "October victories" be explained in terms of Soviet pressure? At that point there was no answer. Clearly, the explanation that I seemed to suggest was too painful to be accepted.

To be sure, some of the people I talked to expressed distaste for aspects of Gomulka's personality. "I can't stand that man," said one actor, who had just told me the restrictions on workers' councils were of "no consequence." "He's narrow and prudish. Why, last year he started censoring the television just because he turned on his set one evening when he was too tired to read Lenin's *Collected Works* and to his horror saw a girl doing a strip-tease! What an awful prude—hasn't he ever seen a bosom in his life?" (Apparently my friend believed that the strip-tease is standard fare on television in the West.) When other people in the room turned on him for attacking the one Communist leader who is decent, well-meaning, and deserving of support, my friend gave in, muttering, "I still don't like him, but I suppose there is no one else. . . ."

Yet gradually I came to realize that the young Polish intelligentsia's acquiescence in Gomulka's program was as much an expression of faith as an act of resignation. With the collapse of the dreams of 1956, there was no longer any faith in all-embracing solutions, but there was a faith in one's ability to alter, however slowly and modestly, the society in which one lived. The acceptance of Gomulka supported this faith, it staved off hopelessness and despair. Meanwhile people live and work as best they can. The writer who told me that revisionists can do nothing but "wait," is writing "something for the drawer." The one who derided the literary pretensions of the revisionists is quietly engaged in scholarship. The young actress who told me that Gomulka is helpless to do otherwise is active in a new experimental theater that has already earned the displeasure of the orthodox critics for its modernistic style and veiled political references. (I saw its performance of *Jacobowsky and the Colonel*—a superb piece of expressionistic staging that put to shame the original Broadway production and the recent movie version.) The young sociologist had worked for months with Warsaw hooligans—a rougher breed than their counterparts in London, Paris, and New York—and was now an expert on the subject.

The young architect who sat with me one night till two in the morning, bitterly assailing the past, passionately decrying the trends of the last year, and confessing that he saw no way out of the present difficulties, was engaged in urban planning and had the satisfaction of seeing plans for new towns "wholly different in conception from what prevailed here during the period of so-called 'socialist realism'" slowly being brought to life. The difficulties, he complained to me, were still enormous. For years competent people were denied important positions in his Ministry in favor of party bureaucrats; no decision could be made without the approval of numerous authorities, some of whom still adamantly opposed any new ideas; shortages and breakdowns occurred continuously—yet somehow work was progressing, something was being accomplished. An hour earlier he had denounced the suppression of *Po Prostu* as a "typical act of Bolshevik perfidy," yet now his eyes were gleaming as he described the various housing projects on which he was working. Clearly, I felt as I left him, he and the others had not ceased fighting, even though the battleground had shifted and the stakes were less exciting.

* * *

On September 6, 1939, my parents and I, accompanied by several friends, mounted a small horse-driven wagon filled with suitcases, pillows, and provisions and started our long trek eastward, to escape from the German armies which five days before had invaded Poland. Our point of departure was a health resort for Jewish children suffering from incipient tuberculosis, located near

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Warsaw at which I had been a patient. Most of the children had already been sent home two or three weeks earlier (Poland had been expecting war since July); the last group of children left on September 5. The buildings were empty. Several months later they were to be reoccupied by about seventy children from the Warsaw Ghetto and surrounding towns. It was a short-lived revival, however: in August 1942 Nazi troops surrounded the resort and all the children (by that time they numbered about two hundred) were deported, together with their nurses, doctors, and technical staff, to Tremblinka.

Nineteen years after I left the resort I returned to it. I was accompanied by a pre-war friend, the only one I found in Warsaw, and a Western journalist.

It was a bright Sunday afternoon. When we entered the grounds, we noticed piles of bricks, containers of cement, pails filled with paint. After a while a pleasant-looking young man—who lives there now, along with several dozen other people—emerged from one of the buildings and proceeded to show us around. Yes, he knew the history of this place. Politely, he told us about the changes that have been made, and about the present work of renovation. And politely, too, without a trace of emotion, he listened to my stories and reminiscences, to the halting remarks and sighs of recognition.

Overcome by grief and nostalgia, I broke away from the journalist and the young Pole and, accompanied by my friend, strolled through the once-familiar grounds. There was too much to remember, too much to bemoan. Here was the place of my most poignant childhood memories. And here, too, was a shattering symbol of the utter destruction of Polish Jewry. There was not even a commemorative plaque or inscription on either the gate or on one of the buildings. I mentioned this to my friend, but then decided not to pursue the matter. It seemed so pointless: there was really no one left to care.

If the resort remained at least physically intact, Warsaw—the center of the 3.5 million Jewish community of pre-war Poland—was overwhelming in its stark destruction. Nothing remains of the ghetto: not a single house, not a single wall. In its place the Poles have erected new low-income dwellings. The names of the streets are the same—Nowolipki, Leszno, Karmelicka—but there is nothing about these streets that could possibly remind one of pre-war Warsaw. The architecture is new, the layout different, the smells are not the same, and a heavy silence has replaced the boisterousness of the pre-war days.

In part this silence is explained by the fact that great stretches of the former ghetto are still just rubble and weeds, overshadowed by huge cranes waiting to resume the long and arduous work of reconstruction. (Warsaw is apparently being rebuilt in spurts. Some sections have been rebuilt in full—notably the "Old City" which had dated back to the 15th century and was reconstructed on the basis of old manuscripts, diagrams, and paintings. The architecture in other parts of the city varies from Russian "monumental" to quasi-Swedish modern.) About the only reminder of the annihilation of the Polish Jewry is a monument to the Ghetto Fighters which stands in the center of a huge square strewn with rubble. When I was there, it looked squalid and neglected, and I was told later that the authorities are powerless to protect it from anti-Semitic vandals.

THE one systematic link with the past is maintained by the Jewish Historical Institute, which stands on the spot formerly occupied by the famous Tlumackie Synagogue. Built in the latter part of the 19th century by the Italian-Polish architect Leander Marconi, it was demolished by the Nazis on May 16, 1943. In the house erected on its ruins the visitor may now see a continuing exhibit of the life and death of the Warsaw Ghetto: photographs of Jews being tortured by grinning Nazis; the milk can that contained the manuscripts of Emmanuel Ringelblum's diary*; pictures of crematoria; examples of the Star of David that Jews were forced to wear; photographs of tanks enter-

*See COMMENTARY, July 1958 for an excerpt from the diary which has since appeared in book form (*Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto*, edited and translated by Jacob Sloan, McGraw-Hill).

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ing the smoldering ghetto in April 1943; photostats of German army and Gestapo documents describing hand-to-hand battles with Jewish fighters. Until 1957, the exhibit portrayed the Communists as virtually the only political group that resisted the Nazis, although the leader of the Resistance had been a member of the left Socialist-Zionist Hashomer Hatzair, and other left-wing Zionist groups and the Jewish Socialist Bund played a far more prominent role in the 1943 uprising than did the handful of Jewish Communists. But following the Polish "thaw," the exhibit was revised and brought rather more in line with historical truth. And last year it was revamped again. At the present time, the emphasis is still on the role played by Jewish Communists; nevertheless, the portrait of Mordekhai Anilevitch, the leader of the Resistance, is prominently displayed, as are the portraits of Bundist leaders Abrasha Blum and Abraham Feiner.

Yet despite the shift in emphasis, the museum is rarely attended by anyone except the occasional visitor from abroad, nor is the Institute, of which it is part, an object of widespread curiosity to either Jews or Gentiles. Subsidized by the Polish government, the Institute, under the direction of Professor Ben Mark, continues its research into the destruction of the Polish Jewry, publishing books and monographs, and microfilming all the important documents (copies are now regularly forwarded to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem). Even this work is bound to end as Jewish life in Poland slowly but inexorably approaches total extinction.

For there is little doubt that the thousand-year-old history of the Polish Jews is now coming to an end. "We are living here like Marranos," said a Jewish woman doctor to me. "Our children still know that they are Jews, but will *their* children know, or their grandchildren?" She was wrong, of course. Unlike the Marranos of Spain, no Jew in Poland today is forced to hide his identity, and those who do hide it have no wish to practice their Jewishness in secret. The Gomulka government's attitude is one of "sympathetic neutrality": no great efforts are made to combat the traditional Polish anti-Semitism, but neither is any concerted effort made to keep Jews from emigrating.*

THE 35,000 Jews remaining in Poland today are, in fact, largely made up of those who had been permitted to leave Russia in accordance with the agreement signed by the Polish and Soviet governments in 1956. The repatriates from Russia, I was told, were treated decently. While I was in Poland, the flow of emigrants from Poland slowed down considerably—due to pressure from Stalinist elements in the party, I was told. Yet there seemed to be little doubt that eventually all those who wished to emigrate would be permitted to do so. According to the latest reports from Poland, repatriation is now coming to an end.

At the present time Jewish life in Poland is still organized institutionally. There is the Social and Cultural Association of Polish Jews; there is the government-subsidized Jewish Theater, which tries to maintain the high traditions of the pre-war Jewish theater, but can only function regularly by spending at least several weeks a year playing to audiences in France, Belgium, or Great Britain; the religious Jews are represented by the Central Committee of the Jewish Religious Communities; such world-wide organizations as the Joint Distribution Committee and ORT also maintain their activities.

Yet all these institutions lead a shadow existence. The Yiddish *Folks-shtime* puts on a brave show, but few can be deceived by the ringing editorials about the role of Jews in the construction of a "glorious socialist future." The seven Jewish schools continue to function, yet—as I had a chance to find out by visiting one of them—the language of instruction is not Yiddish, contrary to the

*As an example of Gomulka's "judicious" approach to the problem of anti-Semitism, I was told on good authority that when the German Social Democratic leader Carlo Schmid visited Warsaw last year and wished to place a wreath on the Ghetto Monument, he was strongly advised not to do so unless he first paid homage to a purely Polish symbol of Nazi persecution—a case of typical Gomulkaist caution, I was assured, rather than a manifestation of anti-Jewish feelings.

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assurances given me by an official of the Association of Polish Jews: most of the children had recently come from Russia and understand neither Yiddish nor Polish; and moreover most of them will soon be en route again. A large number of Jews settled in the so-called Western territories, in four or five towns, and there has been talk about the birth of new "Jewish towns" in Poland. But this is a myth; most of the inhabitants are transients, waiting for an opportunity to leave the country.

Anti-Semitism has much to do with the desire for emigration: sixteen years after the mass slaughter of six million Jews, the old hatreds still persist. Nevertheless, there have been some improvements. After the excesses of 1956-57, instigated in large measure by Polish Stalinists anxious to divert the flood of anger into "traditional" channels, the incidence of anti-Jewish outbursts lessened perceptibly. Apart from cases of Jewish children ostracized by their co-pupils for shunning the religion classes now taught on school premises (in accordance with the agreement signed between Cardinal Wyszynski and Gomulka at the end of 1956), one hears little about actual anti-Semitic incidents. (I was told by the director of ORT in Poland that it is occasionally difficult to place qualified Jewish workers in shops and factories.) It is undoubtedly true, too, that—in contrast to pre-war days—the *young* Polish intelligentsia is astonishingly free of anti-Semitic sentiments, that there exists a certain sense of collective shame, and that there is interest in the "Jewish contribution to Polish culture and civilization"—witness the translations into Polish of works by Sholom Aleichem and other Yiddish writers and poets (including those murdered in the Soviet Union), the production of *Jacobowsky and the Colonel* and *The Diary of Anne Frank*, the blistering attacks on anti-Semitism by both the younger and older revisionists, the existence of a Polish-Israeli Friendship Society, and the popularity (among intellectuals) of the works of A. Rudnicki, one of the best contemporary Polish writers, a Jew who writes frequently on Jewish subjects.

YET even if anti-Semitism were to disappear entirely (which is inconceivable), Polish Jews would still feel impelled to leave the country, for Poland today is a wasteland for Jews, a huge cemetery full of haunting memories and rotting graves. To speak Yiddish on the streets of Warsaw or Lodz—as I had occasion to do several times—is an uncanny experience. Do the startled faces of the Poles who happened to overhear you reflect surprise, hostility—or both? "My God," said one woman who had known my family before the war, "I haven't spoken Yiddish in so many years! Not that I deliberately avoid it—after all, everyone around here knows that I am Jewish, but who is there to talk to?"

Small wonder, then, that most Jews wish to emigrate. Among those who place a premium on a Jewish milieu, Israel is the goal. (There is also an infatuation with Israel among many half or even totally assimilated Jews, or former anti-Zionists; they see in it the one country in the world which has managed, in many ways, to translate dreams into reality.) For the great majority, however, Israel is only the second—and unavoidable—choice. "Perhaps I myself would go to Israel," said a man in his early forties, "but my wife is afraid they won't accept her there; we've heard stories. . . ." His wife is a Gentile; in their apartment a photograph of Cardinal Wyszynski stands next to the portraits of their two children, both of whom are probably being brought up as Catholics. His case is not unique. In conversations on this subject, other Polish Jews invariably mentioned letters from former countrymen who emigrated to Israel and were unable to make a go of it. Unlike the patently fraudulent accounts which have been appearing in the Soviet press during the past two years, these letters (I saw one of them myself) were undoubtedly genuine. Were the gates of America opened to Polish Jews, the queues in front of the U.S. Consulate in Warsaw would undoubtedly lengthen hugely.

Nevertheless, Jews are leaving and will continue to leave. It is estimated that of the present total, about 20,000, plus most of the repatriates still coming from Russia, will

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eventually leave Poland. Only about 15,000 Jews would then remain—mostly elderly people, or assimilated ones (quite a few kept the "Aryan" names they had during the German occupation), or the few dedicated Communists and those with a stake in the *status quo*. When that time arrives, the history of the Polish Jews will, to all intents and purposes, have come to an end.

* * *

IT DID not take me long to realize that to continue roaming through Polish streets as a returned Jewish "tourist" (a word that is most inappropriate in present-day Poland) in search of vestiges of the past, was as heartrending as it was futile. For it was a new country in which I now found myself, and it was the newness which I had to see and comprehend. Not only to one who remembered it before the war, but to anyone who comes to it with any preconceptions about a Communist society, Poland appears full of surprises. For it is the only country behind the Iron Curtain where a Communist government has been forced to make peace with a powerful Church; where a Communist party has successfully resisted Soviet domination and retained a modicum of national independence; where fidelity to Moscow has been acknowledged as a matter of necessity rather than choice; where official censorship exists side by side with a degree of personal freedom; where ideological precepts and slogans have yielded more and more to pragmatic considerations; where a modified "NEP" in the countryside is regarded as a realistic measure, rather than as a heresy to be struck down at the first opportunity.

Glancing again through my diary I find that the few dozen people I saw and the experiences I had reflected the typical striking contrasts of contemporary Poland. There was the leading functionary of one of the non-Communist "parties"* whose office bookshelves were lined with Lenin's and Stalin's *Collected Works* (in Russian), and who—in the most urbane manner—assured me that differences between the various parties *do* exist, but are invariably ironed out before any policy is embarked upon; and who, to prove his contention, showed me a letter from one of his party workers in the provinces in which he was addressed as "Dear Colleague" rather than "Comrade." There was the editor of a leading liberal Catholic paper who told me that the group he represents feels that all the talk about Communism or socialism is "simply a lot of nonsense," since no one in Poland knows any longer what Communism really is. The only aim of his group, he told me, is to mediate between the Catholic masses and the anti-Catholic government, to support any economic or social measure that "increases the area of individual freedom," and to combat any government policy that tends to restrict it. As for the church-state conflict, which at the time had flared up again, he told me frankly that in his opinion the anti-government sermons of some individual priests had contributed much to the existing tension. There was the young functionary of *Pax*—a powerful organization with the avowed aim of squaring totalitarian Communism with Catholic dogma, headed by Boleslaw Piasecki, pre-war leader of the anti-Semitic Polish "brown-shirts"—who spoke with scorn about the poor deluded liberal Catholics who knew nothing about the "realities of power." There was the peasant who reminisced about the good old days ("There used to be seven bakeries in our village—now there's only one . . ."), and who asked when the Americans would come and put an end to Poland's troubles; and the waiter in my hotel who would bring me Polish mineral water instead of beer whenever Russian beer was all the bar had.

Then there was the chauffeur of a local factory director who pretended to be a cab driver, and whose fraud I discovered when the car was stopped by a militia-man who demanded to see the driver's documents. "Tell him you're Director Karp," he whispered

*The official name of the Communist party is the United Workers party; it plays the "leading role" in the so-called National Front, which also embraces the Democratic party and the United Peasant party—both offshoots of pre-war parties, with little or no voice in the determination of either foreign or domestic policy.

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to me, as the car was coming to a halt. "Director who?," I said, startled—it was my second day in the Polish capital; "Director Karp!" Luckily the militia man *did* take me for Director Karp and didn't ask me for my documents; bewildered as I was, I might very well have followed the driver's instruction and landed myself in jail. As I was later to find out, this was standard practice—as is any attempt to supplement one's meager salary through "extra-legal" means. One night, shortly before my departure, I found myself stranded in the outskirts of Warsaw, hailed a passing ambulance, and was swiftly brought to the steps of my hotel.

There was the drab yet imposing steel-town of Nowa Huta, described in the bitter, haunting "Poem for Adults" by Adam Wazyk ("From villages, from little towns, they go in wagons,/to build a foundry, to conjure up a town,/to dig out a new Eldorado . . ./ With a storehouse of oaths, with a little feather pillow/bestial with vodka, boasting of tarts,/a distrusting soul— . . ./is suddenly thrust out from medieval darkness . . .") —and the fishing village on the Baltic coast, which had undergone no change whatever, with its muddy streets and leisurely strolling goats. There were the dreary newspapers, and the exciting theaters; the crowded cafés with their dazzling arrays of pastries, and the queues of tired workers waiting to get a wretched meal in a "third category restaurant" furnished with long, narrow tables and no seats.

My last night in Poland, I saw an American journalist stationed in Warsaw who told me that the longer he was in the country, the more it reminded him of his native Catskill "borscht belt." At first I failed to grasp the comparison, but the more I reflected upon it the less outlandish it seemed. For there is a certain familiality in this strange Communist society which tends—particularly in the absence of organized terror—to reduce factional intra-party struggles to the level of literary café-brawls; a refusal to take things seriously, a desperate wish to be amused rather than depressed, a tendency to dismiss ideological rhetoric ("No one reads Gomulka's speeches any more," was a common refrain), and to indulge in self-irony rather than morbid introspection.

As I sat in the converted Polish bomber that was taking me to Vienna, the newspaperman's phrase came back to me. Here was a disheveled though attractive stewardess who dispensed huge glasses of tea and stacks of newspapers and magazines ("Now you probably don't want this," she said to my gloomy-looking neighbor, pointing to a copy of the party's newspaper *Trybuna Ludu;* "here is something more appealing,"—and she pulled out a German film magazine featuring a scantily clad actress on its front cover); behind me a middle-aged man took out his violin and started playing a piece by Wieniawski, to everybody's obvious satisfaction; a little later, a drab looking woman decided to entertain us with mournful Slavic songs. Were these the builders of the great socialist future?, I kept asking myself, as I looked at the faces of my neighbors, a few of them hidden in paper bags, as the plane kept rocking violently over the Tatra mountains. I had my doubts then. I had them two hours later as the plane landed on the sunswept Vienna airport. And I have them now.

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LIBERAL HOPES AND CONGRESS REALITIES

The World of Capitol Hill Politics

WILLIAM V. SHANNON

THE 86th Congress demonstrates more vividly than usual the often ignored fact that in America we have not one but two kinds of national politics. One is the politics of the big states like New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, and California and the big metropolitan centers like Detroit and Dallas. The other is the politics of Washington, the nation's capital; indeed, of the northwest quadrant of this city, the section bounded by Capitol Hill and the White House and including within it the newspaper and television offices, the fashionable hotels and law offices of Connecticut Avenue, the palatial chanceries of Embassy Row, and the smart town houses of Georgetown and Spring Valley. If the Pentagon across the river in Virginia is considered as an annex, one may say that northwest Washington is the center of a national politics all its own, interlocking with and yet separate from the big-time politics of our major economic regions and political subdivisions. We have all heard of "Potomac Fever" and we know that defeated congressmen and displaced government officials "can't go home to Pocatello." But it is doubtful if most of us ordinarily comprehend the role and the importance of the Washington environment in our national politics.

In a strictly economic sense, the politics of the big states and metropolitan centers is *real* because it reflects economic divisions and because it is closer to the voters, the ultimate source of all political power, while the politics of Washington is *artificial* because it is based on psychological atmosphere, on ephemeral personal relationships, on publicity, and on arbitrary and mechanical rankings, such as the seniority system and diplomatic protocol. The politics which Michigan's Governor G. Mennen Williams, Neil Stabler, the Democratic state chairman, and Walter Reuther play in terms of the interests of Detroit automobile workers and Negroes and dairy farmers is, in this sense, more real than the jockeying between Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson and Senate Minority Leader Everett Dirksen as to which party is more to blame for unbalancing the President's budget. But it would be an unfortunately narrow view of politics that would categorize only the tangible and specific as real and downgrade the psychological and atmospheric as artificial. The difficulty is not in acknowledging that these influences exist and are important, but rather in defining and describing them. There has never been a really good treatment in fiction of Washington political life. Every attempt from Henry Adams's novel *Democracy* to the movie *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* has fallen wide of the mark. Nor have the members of my own profession, the political reporters, done any better. It may be that novelists would have to know politics as well as political reporters and reporters would have to think of their material as novelists do and that nobody has yet come along who can do both. One would need to accumulate many details to convey adequately the unique atmosphere of Capitol Hill in which Congress lives and does its work; a senator, for example, by punching the button three times can reverse an elevator in its upward or downward course and take everyone else three or four floors out of his way. Since congressmen hire their own police force on a patronage basis, the police hold up traffic

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when a member of the House walks from the House Office Building to the Capitol. Or consider the seniority system: for a congressman one's seniority determines almost literally everything including what office one gets, where one sits at the committee table, and in what order one gets to question the witness. This extraordinary atmosphere, at once luxuriously and gluttonously privileged and at the same time strictly regulated, sometimes makes congressmen, particularly senators, resemble pampered babies; it helps explain why defeated politicians sometimes have the stricken look of a child torn from his mother's breast.

One thinks of the egotism, the panache, the introversion of the Washington political scene because so much of what has happened here since January is not understandable in terms of any group interest theory of politics, any clash of classes or regions, and even less of any theory of constitutional government. Southerners who got elected back home by ranting about the race issue here may spend their time quietly working away on some abstruse problems in international trade or worrying through a revision of the patent laws. Northerners who were elected by unemployed loggers or textile workers may here be devoting most of their attention to NATO parliamentary committees or the Indian loan. Or, to cite a public figure familiar to everyone, we may recall Harry Truman who during most of his first term in the Senate from 1935 to 1940 was known in Washington only for toiling away on a subcommittee on railroad bankruptcy and reorganization. This was an activity of some interest, no doubt, to the population of Missouri, where the Missouri Pacific railroad was then in receivership, but it is highly doubtful that the fate of any railroad was of prime concern to most Missourians in the 1930's. The point is that what a politician says on the stump is not necessarily what he says here in Washington and that what primarily concerns his constituents may not be what preoccupies him in his daily legislative grind. This is not to say that there is no relationship whatever between group, sectional, and class interests and politics as it is played in Washington. It would be absurd to suggest this. However, there is a gap, and sometimes a considerable gap, between the national politics of issues and interests constantly evolving at the state and metropolitan level and the national politics of Congress. Washington, like a rare flower, is sometimes explicable only in terms of itself.

A STRIKING demonstration of how Congress and the capital it dominates frequently live in a world unto themselves was presented by Senator Lyndon Johnson's decision to join the new "Western caucus." The senators from the desert and mountain states had long cooperated informally in a bipartisan regional bloc. Last November's election, however, carried to an advanced stage the steady decimation of Republican senators from these areas. Under the leadership of Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana, Johnson's good friend and assistant leader, the Democrats decided to withdraw and form a new regional caucus limited exclusively to members of their own party. The mild surprise was that the Westerners not only voted to admit the two Democrats from Alaska, which was logical enough, but to "annex" Texas and Oklahoma as well. This inspired a rash of stories that Johnson would now make his bid for the presidency as a Westerner rather than a Southerner, that the West was replacing the South as the dominant power bloc in the Senate, and that the Senate would now begin to speak with a western accent rather than a southern drawl.

This is almost a classic example of a phenomenon that has considerable interest and significance for Washington but for the country at large is an almost meaningless event. Texas, after all, has not been changed in any way by Johnson's move. The state, its people, and its economic and social interests are the same as they were before. Texas is no less Southern nor more Western. What difference does it make to a Texas oil producer or cattle rancher or Negro laborer or Mexican-American farm hand whether one

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of his two senators now meets every couple of weeks with the Arizonans and the Coloradoans and talks about water and reclamation instead of meeting with the senators from Alabama and South Carolina and talking about textile tariffs or cotton quotas? The South has always been culturally and economically diverse with only the totem of racialism maintaining a synthetic unity. The key question for Lyndon Johnson is not which caucus he attends but whether, as a middle-of-the-roader on civil rights bills, he makes concessions to the viewpoint of Mississippi or that of Illinois.

In national politics as it is played within the confines of northwest Washington, however, Johnson's move into the Western camp was a matter of moment because as long as he can maintain the solid support of the mountain-state senators and keep his original Southern base, he is the master of the Senate. Joining the Western caucus is symbolic of the care and skill he has lavished on winning this mountain-state support. When only fifty votes are needed to make a majority in the Senate, the two senators from Nevada and the two from Wyoming are obviously important. In national politics as it is played outside of Washington, however, these states are of no consequence. Nevada and Wyoming matter little at national conventions or in presidential elections. Similarly, Clair Engle, the Democratic senator from California, is perfectly willing to sit with Johnson in a Western caucus and discuss, let us say, water rights; but when it comes to revising the rules to curb filibusters, Engle, mindful of the hundreds of thousands of Negro and Mexican-American voters he has in the Los Angeles area, has voted consistently against the southern compromise sponsored by Johnson. Here Engle finds more affinity with a senator from Michigan or Illinois than with one of his "Western" colleagues. The same is likely to be true of the actions of California's delegation regarding the platform and the candidates at the 1960 convention. The "Western bloc" is purely a phenomenon of national politics, Washington style.

The explanation for the failure of Congress to give clear and ready expression to the liberal mandate the Democratic party received last fall lies in the difference between these two brands of national politics. Under our system, only the President can articulate effectively the national political consensus because he is the only elected official who represents a nationwide constituency. The Senate majority leader or the Speaker of the House cannot because he is elected only by his own state or congressional district. They do not hold their positions of leadership in the congressional hierarchy because of any decision by the whole people; rather they are dependent upon their skill in putting together a personal power combination among their colleagues. In the Democratic party, because of the one-party tradition of the South, this has traditionally meant that the Southern conservatives control the choice of the party floor leader in the Senate and usually the Speaker of the House. The only exception in the Senate in recent decades occurred in 1937 when Franklin Roosevelt, by the exercise of all the force of the presidency, was able by one vote—38 to 37—to elect Alben Barkley of Kentucky over Pat Harrison of Mississippi, the choice of the Southern group. One need not go into the precise arithmetic to demonstrate that twenty Southerners can ordinarily pick up the marginal votes needed to make a majority at any given time, even when as at present the number of Democrats in the Senate rises to 64. The same principle applies in Congress as in a private corporation where a cohesive group need own only a small percentage of the stock to be able to dominate the board of directors. The election last fall did nothing to alter Lyndon Johnson's essential dependence on the members of the Southern bloc who by their long seniority also control two-thirds of the committee chairmanships.

A President, speaking for his whole administration and for the nation that elected him, can present a coherent, unified program in his State of the Union address and can through the publicity-making powers of

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his office focus public attention on that program. No majority leader or speaker can do that. Johnson probably does himself a disservice when he arouses false expectations through his shadow "State of the Union" message each year and his authoritative-sounding legislative programs. He is only first among his equals. Without a president's power to make a budget, to sign or veto legislation, or to make appointments, Johnson has only modest power to shape the work of Congress and none whatever to coerce his colleagues.

The most he or any party floor leader can do is play honest broker and try to give each competing interest group a fair shake. This brokerage function is quite different from presidential leadership. When a party has a President in the White House, major proposals are written up as "administration bills" and thereby command considerable support automatically from loyal party men. When it comes to haggling in the conferences and cloakrooms, the "administration bill," although subject to compromise, provides a minimum basis for discussion and a common point of reference. When a party controls Congress but is out of power in the White House, there is, from its viewpoint, no "administration bill." No version of a legislative proposal has any priority over any other version. The bill which would have preference ordinarily would be the measure sponsored by the chairman of the relevant committee, but what is the fate of civil rights legislation when the relevant chairman is James Eastland of Mississippi or of unemployment compensation when the chairman is Harry Flood Byrd of Virginia? Johnson has attempted to overcome this difficulty by sponsoring a great many bills himself; he has ranged from civil rights to outer space. But this tactic arouses jealousy and antagonism from colleagues who feel he is "hogging" every issue. There are limits to the extent to which a party without a head can pretend it has a head.

The attacks by Senator William Proxmire, Wisconsin Democrat, on Johnson's leadership are, in effect, protests against the way in which he has exercised his brokerage function. Proxmire pointed out, quite accurately, that under Johnson the Democrats usually caucus but once a year and then only to hear Johnson's shadow "State of the Union" message, that the Steering and Policy Committees are rubber-stamp groups whose members exercise no effective check on the leader's decisions, and that the average rank-and-file Democrat has no voice in determining his party's policy in the Senate.

The prevailing reaction in Washington to Proxmire's description of the obvious was one of shock and astonishment; it was as if Proxmire had been guilty of spitting in church or some other gross indiscretion. This reaction was a tribute to the skill with which Johnson has built the legend of himself as the embodiment of practical good sense and political wisdom. It is doubtful if most of the people in the country shared the interest of those at the National Press Club bar or in Captiol Hill offices.

DESPITE the accuracy of Proxmire's view of the situation, he did not strike fire because he appeared primarily concerned with the mechanics of how power was exercised rather than with the ends for which it was used. Moreover, his proposal for more frequent caucuses of Senate Democrats as a reform for Johnson's personal autocratic methods can at best be called unpromising; caucuses more often than not turn out to be inconclusive debating sessions.

When Senator Clark of Pennsylvania and Senator McNamara of Michigan joined the attack, however, and centered the fire on Johnson's management of the unemployment compensation bill, the related questions of power and responsibility in the Senate began to take on significant meaning. There are two issues certain to touch the deepest convictions of the Democratic party: civil rights and unemployment. The drama of the New Deal was played out against the backdrop of millions of jobless. One of the major revolutions in feeling and attitude that attended the New Deal changes of the last generation was the acceptance of the view that un-

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employment was not the result of personal dereliction but was a social disaster. For northern liberal Democrats, the defense of the unemployed ranks with the defense of Negro rights as one of the supreme fighting issues. Johnson, in a notable lapse of acumen, underestimated the intensity of feeling on this issue. When the bill extending the emergency unemployment compensation program for three months, from April 1 to July 1, came to a vote in the Senate in late March, he was on vacation. He had previously refused to intervene to assist the northern senators, led in this instance by Clark and McNamara, in getting the Senate Finance Committee to liberalize important features of the bill. Without his assistance, the liberals were able on the floor to write in an amendment providing that the emergency aid would be available not only to those long-term unemployed already on the rolls on April 1, but also to those jobless who entered the category of long-term unemployed during the three-month extension period. However, when the bill then went to a Senate-House conference committee, Acting Majority Leader Mansfield of Montana named five conferees, four of whom had voted against this amendment. The custom in conference committees is for conferees to defend the bill as passed by their chamber even though they do not personally agree with it, but this custom is often violated. On the unemployment compensation bill, it was violated spectacularly. Senator Byrd and his colleagues reported back within half an hour that the House would not yield and that therefore they had surrendered the amendment written in by the liberals. It was this episode which provoked McNamara to charge in his indignant letter to Johnson that the leadership had "set the fox to guarding the chickens."

Johnson countered the adverse publicity of this incident by appearing at the AFL-CIO "march of the unemployed" meeting (a meeting which, in its own way, was a public relations device to provoke the concern of an administration that resolutely refused to become concerned) and proposed the appointment of a committee to survey the unemployment problem and report back to Congress within ninety days. The fact-finding commission is one of the oldest of all the political devices. One is entitled to be skeptical about how much good it is going to do the jobless. It is likewise doubtful how much political good this gesture accomplished for Johnson or the Democratic party; the Eisenhower administration, not to be outmaneuvered in the Washington scrimmaging, promptly endorsed the commission proposal and thus made it bi-partisan. It is basic to Lyndon Johnson's conception of the present political balance of forces in the country to believe this self-limiting politics of partisan thrust and maneuver, of compromise and accommodation, is the kind which the majority of the public prefers.

THE skirmish over unemployment was part of the general disagreement over how the Democrats have waged "the battle of the budget." President Eisenhower attempted from the outset of the new Congress to place the Democratic majority at a disadvantage by making a concerted fight for a balanced budget. He linked the balanced budget with the fight against inflation, warning that government deficits meant higher prices. At least in Washington terms, this initiative met with considerable success. The proper response for the Democrats to make, according to the liberals, was to contend that the present menace of unemployment and not the future threat of inflation was the genuine problem. Johnson and Speaker Rayburn, however, and the moderates and conservatives in command of most of the policy-making economic committees of Congress, agreed on the same strategy they had pursued in 1957 when George Humphrey, then Secretary of Treasury, opened a budget battle that year by predicting that unless the upward trend of government spending was reversed, the country would have "a depression that will curl your hair." This moderate-conservative strategy was to blur the issue. They agreed that the goal of a balanced budget should not be questioned, but contended it was the Republicans in the execu-

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tive departments downtown and not the Democrats on Capitol Hill who were the real spenders. It is always possible for congressional committees to win this kind of argument. They can cut deeply in the spring and, if the amounts appropriated prove insufficient, they can always pass "supplemental" appropriations the following winter before the fiscal year runs out. This is a battle of adding machines and mimeograph machines with each side shifting budget requests, authorizations, and appropriations back and forth to prove its case.

VIEWED narrowly as a matter of saving dollars and cents for the taxpayer, these economy crusades and budget battles are fraudulent. The President's budget for fiscal 1960, for example, is balanced only if Congress approves increases in postal rates and gasoline taxes. As a constitutional matter, Mr. Eisenhower is well within his prerogatives in taking these proposed increases into account in "balancing" his budget, but as a practical matter, he knows Congress is not going to make either increase.

Viewed broadly, however, the budget battle is of prime importance in the clash of rival philosophies of government. The phrase "balance the budget" is a shorthand way of expressing the outlook of those who do not want to expand the role of the federal government and want, where possible, to reduce it. There is no dispute that over the next decade, even if no new programs are authorized, government spending will go up because of the rise in the cost of veterans pensions, interest on the national debt, and the missile program. Conservatives want to slow this trend down and hold it back. Liberals contend that an increase in government spending, over and above what will be mandatory anyway, is urgently needed. They point to the "social deficit" in schools and low-income housing and in scientists, doctors, and teachers.

These opposing philosophies are not being debated or clarified in Congress. The Democratic congressional leadership acts on the assumption that the balanced budget is too popular and established an American symbol to attack it directly. They further assume that to argue affirmatively the case for big government and a high level of federal spending gets one in very short order to the position of having to advocate higher taxes to pay for it. Liberal intellectuals are now endeavoring to popularize the view that it is only sensible to regard taxes as payments for necessities just like insurance premiums. Old-fashioned, pragmatic politicians have gloomy doubts that this is yet a very well-accepted opinion among the majority of voters.

The battle of the budget has had an effect on all pending legislation; it is not simply a matter of appropriation bills. The only way the President can dramatize his position is to veto Democratic bills and use his veto messages as propaganda documents for his position. But if the bills do not vary too markedly from his own recommendations, how can he make a veto seem logical and persuasive? The strategy of the congressional Democratic leadership has been to present Mr. Eisenhower with just this dilemma. They have worked behind the scenes to reduce the scope and cost of proposed programs in order to put them within a range where the President cannot reasonably veto them or if he does, most middle-of-the-road sentiment will support a move to override the veto. The housing bill and the airport bill were both substantially slimmed down in accord with this strategy. Johnson tried without success to get Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois to accept the same pre-shrunk treatment for his depressed areas bill, but Douglas refused. The liberal senators privately fumed at this "defeatist" strategy but it was not until the unemployment compensation bill defeat that their real sentiments exploded publicly. Compromises that were tolerable where houses and airports were at stake were not acceptable where the jobless were concerned. The protests led by Clark and McNamara seem likely to make Johnson and the rest of the leadership slightly more responsive to liberal opinion in the months just ahead. The outlook nevertheless is for further frustration of the liberal Democrats on a

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wide gamut of issues including the school construction bill, depressed areas, and civil rights. This is not to say that there will not finally be legislation in all of these fields but it is likely to be much compromised and watered down. The difference of opinion between the insurgent liberals and the moderate-conservative congressional leadership cannot be finally resolved in Washington. Only the election of a Democratic President can resolve it, for only a President can presume with any lasting success to speak for the whole party and give the party a definitive lead.

IF THE Democratic liberals in Congress seem doomed to frustration for the next eighteen months because they do not have a President, the Republican liberals are frustrated because they do have one. It is one of the sad ironies of recent politics that the liberal Republican minority, the men once called "Eisenhower Republicans," could muster a shade more strength in 1949 when they attempted to pose Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts against the redoubtable Robert Taft for the party leadership than they could ten years later on behalf of John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky against the far less impressive Everett McKinley Dirksen of Illinois. And this, despite the fact that during six of the intervening ten years they had had a President of their own choice in the White House. There is no need here to recount again the misfortune that Mr. Eisenhower's above-party, above-politics stance has been for the liberal wing of the GOP. One need only state the plain fact that the liberal Republicans such as Clifford Case of New Jersey, Jacob Javits of New York, and George Aiken of Vermont feel leaderless. They are the Republicans who go down the line for the President when he fights for reciprocal trade, for foreign aid, for Pentagon reorganization. They unqualifiedly favor many of the objectives he at least nominally espouses, such as expansion of social security and reform of our wretched immigration laws. However, they have long since accustomed themselves not to expect the kind of close rapport and quick, effective support that would establish their faction as the dominant group in the Republican congressional hierarchy.

The White House, for example, had known for two years that Senator Knowland was going to retire from the leadership to run for governor of California. There was no reason why it could not have chosen one of its unswervingly loyal partisans such as Cooper or Case and seen to it during the intervening two years that the ground was well-laid for his election. This is what a politically alert and responsible President would have done, but Mr. Eisenhower has never been active in this way. Moreover, the forced departure of Sherman Adams last September weakened the liberal bloc. Adams was no raging liberal, but he had a healthy enmity for his fellow New Hampshire Republican, Senator Styles Bridges, the reigning mandarin of the Republican right-wing in the Senate. General "Jerry" Persons, Adams's successor, is friendly with Bridges and affords the liberals less encouragement and backing.

The new development at the beginning of this Congress was the decision of the liberal Republicans to make a fight for the party's floor leadership although they knew from the start they faced defeat. The objective of their effort was not primarily to defeat the personally amiable and ideologically shapeless Dirksen, but rather to curb the power of Bridges, the dean of Senate Republicans in point of service and by far the most influential backstage manipulator. Bridges did much of the "wheeling and dealing" for the often austere and inaccessible Taft and he was the gray eminence of Knowland as he is now of Dirksen. Bridges is, by any reasonable reckoning, the most dangerous foe of everything General Eisenhower entered political life to defend. He was behind the late Joe McCarthy's attack on Ambassador Bohlen back in 1953. (R. W. Scott McLeod, then State Department security chief and now ambassador to Ireland, was a Bridges protege.) Bridges worked with defeated Senator Bricker on behalf of the

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"Bricker Amendment" to the Constitution which Mr. Eisenhower strongly opposed. He worked with Knowland to try to cut off aid to Poland and Yugoslavia. He has frequently voted to cut foreign economic assistance. In numerous other ways, he has thwarted or attempted to thwart Eisenhower administration policies. When the President and his staff were neutral or, indeed, partially sympathetic regarding the Bridges-sponsored Dirksen candidacy, they were guilty of undercutting their own programs and their own political cause. Under all the circumstances, the 20-to-14 margin by which Dirksen defeated Cooper was an entirely respectable showing by the liberals. There is little doubt they would have been victorious if they had obtained the backing of President Eisenhower.

The decision of House Republicans to overthrow the twenty years of leadership of Joe Martin of Massachusetts and replace him with Charles Halleck of Indiana was a victory for the younger but not necessarily more liberal forces within the party. There is no difference in the domestic views of Halleck and Martin, but Martin is less of an aggressive partisan and more disposed to modulate Republican criticism of Democratic domestic programs in exchange for Democratic votes for the administration's foreign aid program and other international bills.

Halleck has tried to reconstitute the Republican-Southern Democratic coalition in full force. Except on votes to override a veto, this is not likely to be decisive. The nearly two-to-one Democratic majority enables the liberal and moderate Democrats to control events notwithstanding the defection of the extreme conservatives.

The struggles for control of the Republican party in Congress were dress rehearsals for a possible contest in 1960 between Vice President Nixon and Governor Rockefeller of New York. Nixon is a close personal and political ally of Bridges while Senator Cooper, the losing liberal candidate, drew most of his votes from New England, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, the region where Rockefeller is naturally strongest and Nixon is weakest. In the House contest, Martin publicly blamed his defeat on the intervention of Nixon's friends.

In both parties, a struggle for control is under way, a struggle that can only be decided, not in Washington where it is now being waged, but in the national conventions and the national election a year hence. The struggle in Washington, however, may ultimately prove important in determining the outcome of the 1960 battle. Back in 1948, Thomas Dewey refused to defend the conservative record which Senator Taft and his associates had made in the 80th Congress and that record helped drag him down to defeat. Similarly, northern liberals frequently complained in 1956 that the Democratic-controlled Congress of 1955-56, whatever its merits, had signally failed to develop any comprehensible, clear-cut issues between the Democratic party and the Eisenhower administration and that in the absence of such issues, Adlai Stevenson's candidacy was hopelessly handicapped.

Only the future can determine whether a liberal Democratic candidate for the presidency will be handicapped by the record of the 86th Congress, controlled by moderates and conservatives, or whether Rockefeller, if he is the Republican nominee, will be too heavily burdened by the Republican record developed by Eisenhower and Nixon. Washington proposes but the country disposes.

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WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE A GOY

A Poet's Talk in Tel Aviv

ROBERT GRAVES

WHAT does it feel like to be a *Goy*? Most modern Jewish fiction, or autobiography disguised as fiction, answers the complementary question "What does it feel like to be a Jew?" The *goyim* who surround each protagonist in these very similar dramas are described objectively; but the Jewish reader and the author himself can only guess what goes on behind their masks. Are they cruel, insensitive, or merely ignorant?

I am a *goy*, and the son of *goyim:* several generations at least on both sides of the family. It has recently become the fashion in the United States for young non-Jewish intellectuals to ransack their yellowing archives in search of a Jewish great-great-grandmother. The other day one of the Lowells of Boston told me with sparkling eyes that he actually *has* a Jewish great-grandmother. I cannot make any such claim. My father's pedigree contains several medieval Kings of England, albeit through an illegitimate line, a Spanish King of Cordoba maternally descended from the Prophet Mahomet, and–since we Graveses married into several Irish families–any amount of legendary Irish kings and heroes. No Cohens or Levis, not one! I did have a German great-grandmother named Schubert, but unfortunately she came of solid Lutheran stock.

Perhaps a closer investigation of the Spanish strain might be rewarding. Once Philip II–I think it was he–decided that all males of Jewish ancestry should wear a hat of peculiar design to distinguish them from men of honest Christian lineage. He did not specify "Aryan," because most of the great Southern aristocrats boasted of their princely Moorish blood. The next day Philip's court jester appeared before him with three such peculiar hats. "Who are to wear these, Fool?" asked the King. "Why, 'nuncle," the Jester answered, "this one is for me, that one is for thee, and t'other is for the Grand Inquisitor!" So the hat was never heard of again . . . At all events, write me down as a *goy* and as a Protestant *goy:* than which nothing in the world could be more *goyesque*. Naturally, my family started with Catholicism, but a direct Graves ancestor was one of the two Roundhead colonels appointed by Parliament to guard Charles I's sacred person at Holmby House in 1647, when he had been captured; and from him descends a long line of Anglo-Irish Protestant rectors, deans, and bishops until I break the sequence.

An early rabbi once declared that the worst day in Israel's long history was neither that on which the ten tribes were carried off into captivity, nor those on which Solomon's and Zerubbabel's Temples went up in flames. It was the day when a group of seventy-two Alexandrian Sages (whom for some unaccountable reason we *goyim* call the "Septuagint," or "Seventy") translated your Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. That makes sense. Israel's very personal religious archives–containing frequent confessions of her backslidings into idolatry, and gloomy

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"WHAT It Feels Like To Be a Goy" was given as a talk to the Israel and Commonwealth Association in Tel Aviv earlier this year. ROBERT GRAVES, the distinguished English poet, novelist, and man of letters who makes his home in Majorca, needs little introduction. Readers will remember previous contributions from his pen, among them "A Dead Branch On the Tree of Israel" (February 1957); "The Legends of the Jews," a review of *Legends of the Bible* by Louis Ginzberg (June 1957); and "Culture Creep," a review-article on Negro folktales in the North (June 1956).

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records of her castigations—passed into enemy hands; with the eventual result that Christian *goyim* who cannot pretend even to be sons of Abraham, claim the God of Israel as their God and the Scriptures as their own Holy Writ; denying your stiff-necked and rebellious Jews any hope of the eventual salvation that your own Prophets had held out to you! And the Moslem *goyim* refuse you admittance to the Cave of Machpelah at Hebron, where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are interred!

An equally bad day for us *goyim* was that on which the Latin Bible first appeared in English translation. The Puritanism which this publication induced proved a severer blow to us than King Harold's defeat at Hastings in 1066, or the revolt of the American colonies in 1776. Puritanism set my ancestors off their balance—because the Bible (here at least I agree with the Catholic priesthood) is a most dangerous book for private reading by people of limited education—and England has never recovered from the widespread mental disorder that resulted. The real trouble lay in having adopted a cult which did not make simple, homely national sense.

For several centuries before this Protestant Bible-reading started, Catholicism had been a way of life rather than a religion, a prolongation of as much Greco-Roman culture as the barbarians had spared; and fitted Europe like an old shoe. The heel might be split, the sole might let in water, but it was wearable. The princes of the Church had allied themselves with temporal monarchs, grown rich, studied classical rhetoric, attended to their ritual duties, but interfered little with pagan holidays, customs, and popular traditions. If the people kept quiet, paid tithes, and reverenced the clergy, that was religion enough: masses were said in Latin, which they did not understand, and the priest discouraged any close interest in theology—promising that he would see them all safely to Heaven.

In 1534, when Henry VIII broke with Rome, he did so for political, not religious reasons. In fact, he was orthodox enough to have won the title "Defender of the Faith" from the Pope himself. But Henry would never have dared make the breach, had he not been supported by a large body of Englishmen who, while secretly studying the Bible in English, suddenly realized the immense difference between the teachings of Jesus recorded in the New Testament, and contemporary Church doctrine. They looked upon the Pope as anti-Christ, and his open sale of indulgences for sin shocked them. Hitherto their knowledge of the Scriptures had been carefully regulated. The priest chose only the more edifying passages for his commentaries; now at last both Testaments lay at their private disposal.

Soon a multitude of non-conforming sects sprang up. Since the monarchy lagged behind these in theological speculation, and maintained the Divine Right of Kings, civil war became unavoidable. And representatives of such extreme Independent sects as Anabaptists, Old Brownists, Traskites, Anti-Scripturists, Familists, Soul-Sleepers, Questionists, Seekers, Chiliasts, and Sebaptists—formed the fanatic Puritan spearhead. King Charles's imprisonment and execution followed as a corollary.

It was old Christian dogma that the Mosaic Law, entrusted by God to the Jews, remained valid only until the Messiah came—that the Messiah had come in the person of Jesus the Nazarene—that though the New Testament was inspired by him to replace it, the prophecies contained in the Old were authoritative proof of his destined Messiahship—that Christians were a New Israel, successors of the Old Israel which had denied Christ and been therefore rejected by God. So my Protestant ancestors, in order fully to understand their New Testament, pored over the Old, and came to remarkable and unsettling conclusions. Some, finding Jesus to have declared that the Law of Moses would never pass away until the end of the world, now regarded Jewish ritual obligations (so far as they could be observed without a Temple or priesthood) as still binding on Christians. For instance, they wanted to

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keep the Jewish Sabbath instead of the Christian Sunday, thought it wicked to eat blood-sausage, and would not remove their hats in church.

The most famous Independent of all, John Bunyan, author of *Pilgrim's Progress,* went further. He could find no evidence in the Bible of any curse on the Old Israel, and was plagued by a desperate conviction that, not being of Jewish stock, he would be burned to cinders by God's avenging angels at the Battle of Armageddon. These Independents, among them the Pilgrim Fathers who had sailed to New England before the Civil War, lived in constant terror of damnation, as it were keeping Yom Kippur all the year round; and their so-called Sabbaths, instead of being days of rest and joy, spread a profound gloom over the week. Even Jesus, whom the medieval Catholics had softened into a gentle, kindly presence—born of a gentle, kindly, semi-divine virgin-mother, a revival of the ancient European Sea- and Moon-goddess—menaced them in dreams with continual reproaches and threats. They did not accept the ethical Law as a sweet burden, like the Pharisees, but made it a yoke of iron; and learned to hate the irreligious Catholics as much, or more, than they hated Jews. Instead of confessing their sins to a sympathetic priest, paying a small penance for a light-hearted absolution, and then cheerfully sinning again, the people acquired individual consciences and a soul-destroying sense of guilt. Merry England, which implied a romantic Virgin-worship (now heretical), perished with Cromwell's victory at Naseby in 1645. The Crown has been Protestant, by law, since 1688.

WHAT does it feel like to be a *goy*? Embarrassing, for careful students of religious history. The trouble began with Saul of Tarsus—later Paul—who once, when in danger of his life from an angry pilgrim crowd, claimed Jewish birth. He certainly became a Jew by adoption early in his career, but according to the Ebionites (the austere apocalyptic section of Nazarenes) was the son of Greek parents; and the Ebionites can hardly be suspected of deliberate falsehood. His story of having sat at the feet of Gamaliel, Israel's Supreme Court Judge, is implausible, if only because Gamaliel required of his picked law students a deep and accurate knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures; whereas Paul, in his Epistles, quotes only the Septuagint, even where the Greek wrongly differs from the original Hebrew text. Paul's father was probably a Syrian-Greek God-fearer, the God-fearers being a Gentile fraternity who accepted the Ten Commandments and were well disposed to their Jewish mentors, but who "bowed in the House of Rimmon"—meaning, that they refused circumcision and obedience to the whole ritual Law, for fear of offending their Greek, or Roman, or Syrian city authorities. Those Jews controlled a great volume of Roman trade, and also international trade with Parthia, India, and beyond. The God-fearers wanted a share of this, and the Jews accepted them as business associates, though without the unquestioning trust that they reposed in proselytes who accepted the full burden of the Law.

To judge from a confession of Paul's in the Epistle to the Galatians, "to the Jews I became as a Jew," it seems that he underwent circumcision—a *sine qua non* for his secret-service work as an *agent provocateur* employed by the Sadducees (collaborators with Rome) against the Nazarenes, to whom all Romans were unclean blasphemers. The Acts of the Apostles frankly describes how Paul, after assisting in the murder of a Greek-speaking Nazarene named Stephen, used this breach of the peace as an excuse for getting the Jerusalem Ebionites arrested and imprisoned; and how, after a spectacular conversion to their faith at Damascus, he once more changed his coat and, three years later, went about collecting God-fearers into a rival religious society of his own. Still later, when accused of defiling the Temple, he declined to be judged by the Supreme Court of Israel, which was famous for its lenity. Suddenly disclosing his Roman citizenship, he appealed to the Emperor: well aware that no honorable Jew would dare to give evi-

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dence in a religious case judged by Nero. Nor would any pupil of Gamaliel's, nor any Jew with the least pride in his race, have made such an appeal. Paul's "Christian" Church became completely separated from the Jerusalem Church of Ebionites and other Nazarenes. The Jerusalem Church was presided over by Jacob of Bethany, an ultra-pious Temple priest, whom Christians call "St. James the Less," and whose judicial murder, according to Josephus, brought about the downfall of the Roman-appointed High Priest Hananiah II. Jacob's Nazarenes regarded Jesus as the Messiah, but otherwise remained no less loyal to the Law and the Prophets than Jesus himself had been. Paul presently claimed that Jesus's crucifixion totally annulled the Mosaic Law, and that an act of repentance and a confession of belief in his Messiahship was the only needful passport to Heaven. Mystical accretions —some of them, like the Trinity doctrine, now given a Gnostic origin, others borrowed from paganism—expanded the Pauline faith. Yet Paul's adoption of the Jewish ethic, as whittled down and reconciled by the God-fearers with obedience to their Roman overlords, stuck; and is still Christian dogma for Catholics and Protestants alike.

When Judaism had been proscribed and nearly battered out of existence, the Christians escaped by joining the hue and cry against their parent faith, accusing the Jews of Jesus's murder, and rewriting the Gospels to present him as an original thinker who detested the Pharisees, knew better than Moses, and was honorably treated by Pontius Pilate, the Roman Procurator. To substantiate the Trinity doctrine, they even went so far as to make Jesus identify himself blasphemously with God.

The Puritans could hardly repudiate St. Paul, whose epistles and life-story formed part of their Bible, and get back to the authentic Jesus. They chose a position somewhere between the Jews and the Catholics; but the diversity of their sects, and a great difference in opinion even within the Established Church of England, where they formed the Low Church party, made this "somewhere" an unhappily vague position. Catholicism never admits any sects; one is either a believer or a heretic.

To us English, all Jews were a mystery for over four hundred years before Cromwell invited them back. They had been expelled in an access of religious hysteria: being accused of numerous unexplained crimes —especially the ritual murders of children, laid at their door, it seems, by members of a primitive pagan cult surviving in East Anglia, who actually committed them. Thus Shakespeare, who pilloried Shylock, the villainous Jew, in his *Merchant of Venice,* is unlikely ever to have met a Jew—unless perhaps a Sephardic physician attached to the Spanish Embassy in London. The tradition of wicked Jews who spat at Christ being endorsed by the Gospels, a Jew was a safe target; and Shakespeare borrowed his story from the Venetians, who had cause to be jealous of their Jewish trade rivals. An unusual feature in the case is Shakespeare's sympathetic understanding of Shylock's troubles.

Cromwell invited the Jews back for political, not religious reasons. They brought modern banking methods to London from Holland, and the City's present financial strength rests squarely on the foundations they laid. Their descendants have met with little trouble since those days, always showing gratitude and loyalty to England. Yet although, a century ago, religious toleration reached a point where Jews could be enrolled in the British nobility, and one even became Prime Minister and founded the Primrose League (the most true-blue Conservative institution of all), it would be foolish to pretend that they have been fully assimilated into British social life. Jewish dietary laws, and the yearly reminder at Pesach that their true home lay far away, made this impossible. They remained guests, albeit honored guests.

Anglican church services are very odd, if one pauses to consider them. It cannot decently be denied that Jesus was a descendant of King David, rather than King Alfred; or that he was born in Judea of a Jewish mother, rather than in Wessex of an Anglo-Saxon

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one; or that he was acclaimed King of the Jews, rather than King of England. Yet he is always thought of as a blond, fair-skinned Anglo-Saxon wearing a Greek robe, like that of Socrates; and so are all his disciples—except perhaps Matthew, the converted tax-gatherer, and, of course, Judas. The oddest part of the service, as I look back to my country childhood, came when the local squire and his lady, the village worthies, and whoever else of the common herd attended Matins on Sunday, sang the Psalms of David: identifying themselves with the Israelites of old, and boasting of God's help to them in Egypt and the wilderness. How unconvincing the psalm of the Babylonian captivity sounded from those bucolic Gentile lips!

By the waters of Babylon we sat down
And wept when we remembered Zion.
As for our harps, we hung them up
Upon the willows that were thereby.
How can we sing the Lord's song
In a strange land?

If only they could have celebrated King Alfred and the Danes, or the Battle of Agincourt, or something in their own glorious past! . . . I last attended an Anglican service (to please my mother) during the First World War, which the Church chose to support as a "Crusade Against Evil." One of the psalms for that Sunday was *Cur Fremunt Gentes?* or "Why do the Gentiles so furiously rage together?"—an unanswered question which, since I had already come to suspect the Gospel denials of Jesus's orthodox Judaism, provoked a bitter smile.

My mother, a saintly woman, educated as a German Lutheran, pitied our Jewish neighbors for their miserable stubbornness—a great tactical mistake—and went out of her way to show them kindness. They did not repel her, but they must have read her like a book. How much guilt underlay this self-enforced pity is problematical: but I do know that the chief motive force in Protestant charity, when directed by the well-placed towards the needy or underprivileged, is guilt. The origins of our British Welfare State can be traced to a sense of guilt in comfortable 19th-century Protestant homes; charity was showered on ragged victims of the Industrial Revolution. It took the form of soup-kitchens, free education, and the vote—as a result of which the former governing class are today being slowly but surely evicted from their ancestral snuggeries. The famous Balfour Declaration purported to be an act of gratitude for the loyal services of Jews in the First World War, especially for Chaim Weizmann's free gift to the British of chemical formulas that greatly assisted the Ministry of Munitions. But the very looseness of the wording "A National Home in Palestine" is psychologically suspect: it suggests a sense of guilt struggling with Protestant orthodoxy.

A couple of generations ago other Puritans, John Bunyan's successors, began to worry that they might not be the people celebrated in the Psalms of David. Yet the Church preached a New Israel chosen by God after the Jews rejected Christ. "Well, who *are* these Jews?" some troubled inquirer pondered and, on consulting his *Encyclopaedia,* found that they were the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, plus a few Levites and Simeonites. The rest of Israel had been carried into captivity and never released. "But an Israelite, except in a fanciful sense, must be descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," he argued, "and Englishmen cannot sail under false colors!" Then a happy thought struck him. "We Christians are those lost tribes!" Hence the extraordinary pseudo-historic theories of the British Israelites, a sect which included a number of wealthy and influential Britons, among them (it was said) the late King George V, Head of the Protestant Church. He hopefully called his heir "David," but David chose to be named Edward VIII; and a beautiful dream ended in tears.

WHILE still a Protestant in faith as well as ethical conditioning, I could not feel at ease with Jews; but as soon as I grasped the historical implications of being a *goy,* and took pains to undo all the knots in which my youthful mind had been entangled, everything changed. In fact, a negative anti-

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anti-Semitism became a positive pro-Judaism. When the State of Israel was proclaimed, I rejoiced; and imagined myself home at church in my childhood, where the same squire and his family, and the same village worthies, were singing cheerfully:

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion,
Then were we like to them that wept!

But not meaning a word of it. . . .

So at last you Jews won what you had always prayed for: a return to your own land! I foresaw that "What it feels like to be a *Goy*" would soon acquire a new sense. A *goy,* in relation to Jews dispersed all over the world, who are living on sufferance as guests in a generally hostile environment, is one thing; a *goy* in relation to a small though dynamic *nation* of Jews, based on their original homeland, is another thing altogether.

Until that miraculous day, most European Jews were taught from earliest infancy: "Be careful! Never listen to the *goyim!* Swallow insults, keep the Law! Be patient; you are one of God's Chosen, and precious in His sight. One day He will make us a nation again!" It was a superiority complex, and difficult for a sensitive *goy* to understand. Though he might be welcomed in a Jewish home and treated like a king, with all the extravagant hospitality of which perhaps the Irish alone are equally capable, he felt inferior and guilty; because he had not suffered a million slights and snubs and insults; and because he had been faithful to his national destiny. Often twenty generations of his ancestors had been around in those parts; but the Jews had been denied an ancestral home three times as long. Pity was not what he felt toward them, nor envy—it was a certain awe. And the Protestant in him said: "Not surprising; the Bible says that they are God's Chosen People." Even St. Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians had blurted out: "What advantage then hath the Jew? Much, chiefly that to the Jews were committed the holy oracles of God."

Of course, a "but" followed; nevertheless . . .

TEN years after the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, your government invited me to visit Israel. I answered in hot sincerity that it was the greatest honor ever paid me. Whatever vicarious guilt I felt for the persecution of your ancestors by mine, was at last officially purged. Here in Israel I am a *goy* in the new, different sense. The *awe* remains: that Israel is a nation once more, and not a sentimental show-piece either, a mock-antique, but a strong, proud, energetic, well-disciplined nation—one that continues to welcome homeless Jewish immigrants into an already crowded country, and establish them as useful citizens.

When I heard of the recent war with Egypt, I smiled a quiet historical, neutral smile: such as came to my lips the other day when I saw a "still" from the film *Solomon and Sheba,* showing Solomon's army in flight before a squadron of Egyptian Uhlans. In 1926, I was professor of English at Cairo University, and saw something of the Egyptian army. Officers were then selected for advancement by weight; and if one of them did not like the look of a subordinate, he would force open his mouth—and spit in it!

My sense of awe has been heightened by the realization that Hebrew is again a living spoken language—the same Hebrew from which our vernacular Old Testament was translated at third hand, through Latin and Greek. And the blood-curdling life-histories of those who came here as ragged refugees, and can now hold their heads high again, seem to me a sufficient guarantee that the New Israel will endure. A friend named John, an officer in your merchant navy, though a member of a kibbutz at Caesarea —told me: "At first, my wife and I talked German in the home, but somehow we slid into Hebrew; it keeps us in touch with the children."

John, by the way, hates being parted from his family by going on distant voyages, and has no natural love of the sea. "Then whatever made a sailor of you?" I asked.

"Dire necessity. All my family at Warsaw went into the gas-chamber, except me. But they helped me to escape, and I managed to

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buy the papers of a Polish sailor killed in 1939. I assumed his identity, and the Germans drafted me into their merchant navy. A week later I contacted the British secret service, so I did not have the crime on my conscience very long. Later, I was in a British prisoner camp on Cyprus, for smuggling arms to Israel. But I never cared to change my occupation. We are short of sailors."

"And your salary?"

"High enough, though I don't handle any of it. Everything goes to the kibbutz. Really, I'm an individualist, but the kibbutzim were needed to handle and organize immigrants, and I naturally show my gratitude, now that I'm well established. Besides, I have few wants except books, and the authorities indulge me in those."

Colonel T. E. Lawrence, whose official biographer I was, thoroughly approved of the Balfour Declaration, and wrote to me before he died in 1935: "It is a problem of the third generation." If he meant "the third generation from now" (for the Rothschild settlements had already attained a fifth or sixth generation of "Sabras"), he was wrong. Unlike Moses, who kept Israel forty years in the Wilderness, you have not needed to await that third generation. The first generation has speeded up history.

Most *goyim* are surprised to find that religious observance is not compulsory here; that, indeed, the orthodox are a minority and many Israelis seem to be free-thinkers. But you may remember what answer Hillel, President of the Sanhedrin, gave the young Roman who impertinently asked to be taught the Law in the time he could stand on one leg. Hillel quoted Leviticus: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself!," adding: "The Law and the Prophets amount only to that." And Hillel discouraged all mystical speculations about the nature of God; he held that the task of loving one's neighbor was exacting enough for most men. Despite minor disputes inseparable from a nation still in its pioneering days, loving your neighbor is the main task you Israelis have chosen; or so I judge from visits to five kibbutzim, where friends of mine are members. A little free-thinking, short of active anti-clericalism, can surely be forgiven.

Our British Welfare State rests on a theory of social justice, and fair shares for all. But "Fair Shares For All" does not encourage overtime, or doing without luxuries so that as many poor fellows as possible can benefit from one's own industry. "Love thy neighbor!" is a positive injunction—like "Six days *shalt* thou labor!" "Fair Shares For All" is negative.

What advantage therefore hath a Jew? Much: chiefly that unto the Jews were committed the holy oracles of God! And, though there have been saints in every land, and under every religion, Israel was the first nation to make brotherly love and mercy head the list of moral virtues. So, if asked to pronounce on the knotty question: "What is a Jew?," I should answer: "Anyone who feels himself a Jew and will faithfully obey that Levitical text." All other considerations seem to me legalistic and unworthy of Israel's historical role.

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DAILY LIFE IN THE MESSIANIC ERA

A Story

J. AYALTI

"ARE you lost?" The girl stood in the doorway of a wooden shack near the canal.

Herman stopped. "No. But did you see an old lady pass by?"

"With a black lace scarf on her head? I saw her. I know everybody here in Bay Village, and I could tell right away she was a stranger, not somebody from the neighborhood," the girl walked up to Herman as she spoke. She appeared to be about twenty. Her hair blew into her face.

"And where did she go from here?" Herman asked.

"Over there, on the other side of the canal. But there's no bridge here. We must go this way." She accompanied him to where the canal ended, several hundred yards up, near a wide road that ran from Brooklyn to the ocean.

"Aren't you from the candy store on Avenue U? Aren't you Mr. Herman?" she said, suddenly. He looked at her in surprise. She continued, "My name's Maureen. Maureen O'Brien. You wouldn't know me, but I know the store from the old days when I went to high school. There was a gang of us."

They were on the other side of the canal now. The streets were narrow and sandy, and the wooden huts seemed bleached, surrounded by bushes and little trees. Herman thought it looked very much like a small town in the Old Country. "The old lady must have smelled it!" he marveled aloud.

"Is the old lady lost?" the girl asked.

"Yes. . . ."

"Where was she going?"

"Back home, I guess."

"Here? Or do you mean to Manhattan Beach? Did you use to live there?"

Herman was silent as they kept walking toward the ocean. The girl led the way, and Herman concentrated his gaze on her swinging legs. Suddenly he spoke. "It wasn't Manhattan Beach she wanted to get to . . . to her home is 'back home'—the Old Country. . . ."

The girl turned her head. "What do you mean? You're kidding!"

"No. Every once in a while she sets out for the Old Country, Europe, where she came from."

"On foot? Over the ocean?"

"She's quite old, and a little . . . not all there," Herman explained. "She's my wife's mother, and every once in a while she disappears from the house. Sometimes days pass before we find her."

The girl's face became thoughtful. "I understand. There are times when I'd like to run away, too. To Hollywood!" She laughed.

They stood for a while in silence at the edge of the surf and then they walked back and turned right, toward the hills, rising on the other side of the road that led to the dunes. "Have you ever walked here before?" the girl said. "I always imagined Ireland looks something like this. My father once disappeared, for a long time. We found out he had gone off to Ireland. He fought against the British for Free Ireland."

"For Free Ireland?" Her last words, on the instant, had reawakened in him all the self-doubts, fantasies, and guilt feelings that had been wearying him for months. "For Free Ireland?" he repeated.

"Yes. That's why they called my father The Fighting Irishman in Bay Village," again her laugh rang out.

J. AYALTI, the Yiddish writer and journalist, was born in Poland in 1910, and later lived in Palestine, France, and Uruguay before coming to the United States. His books include a collection of short stories and several novels. He has published several stories in COMMENTARY, including "Memo from the Thirty-Six" (September 1948) and "The Presence Is in Exile, Too" (September 1946). "Daily Life in the Messianic Era" is adapted from his recent novel *Vaiter fun Brooklyn* (*Beyond Brooklyn*).

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"And he never got in touch with you?"

"How could he? They were all underground. The Movement was secret."

"Of course," Herman said. "That's the way it is in Palestine. Underground."

The girl, mindful of their search for the old lady, moved ahead, surveying the whole area.

"What about your mother?" Herman shouted. But she had evidently forgotten what they had been talking about. "What about her?" she called back.

"What did she do all those years . . . when your father was away in Ireland?"

"Oh, that! . . . she went to work. That was long ago."

Herman barely kept up. He was deep in thought. What would Sylvia do? And little Michael? The store? . . . But there are volunteers! There are American boys sailing the refugee ships. . . .

THE girl had stopped at the crest of a rise, and now she turned and gestured excitedly. Herman ran toward her. "Who is that over there? Isn't that her?" she asked.

Below them was the bent figure of a woman, on a rock near an inlet of the ocean. Her body swayed gently back and forth. Her black scarf fluttered in the breeze.

"That's her," Herman said. They ran down the slope.

"Look, she's reading a book!" the girl lowered her voice as they approached the old lady.

"It's probably the Woman's Bible," said Herman. "Every time she runs away she takes her old Woman's Bible with her."

"What's her name?"

"Sonya . . . Sonya Gottlieb. People call her Mrs. Sonya." Soon they were so close to the old lady that they could hear her sing-song intonation.

She seemed to be chanting a melody that had neither begining nor end. She was not aware that they stood directly behind her. She was back home, it was the eve of Passover, she was chanting the homily of the sages concerning the meaning of *chametz* and *matzoh*, the unleavened and the leavened, for the holiday:

"And ye shall observe the purity of the matzoh. The commentators have developed at length the inner meaning of the idea of unleavened and leavened foods. And the gist of their words is that leavened foods refers to the Will to Evil, matzoh to the Will to Good. For, just as dough rises and leavens when it is sour, so the Will to Evil, which is a sour agent, causes the body to rise and turn sour. But matzoh, not being a sour dough, cannot be puffed up. Hence, it refers to the Will to Good, which moderates all human lusts and tames pride that would raise itself above God and man.

"And our searching out of the leavened food, the practice of sweeping the leavened food on the eve of Passover out from wherever in the home it may be found, teaches us that we must scrutinize every part of our body where sin might attach itself. For example, we must scrutinize our mouths to sweep out of them all nasty gossip . . ."

Herman touched her arm, "Mamma!"

The old lady raised her head and gazed at him in amazement. "Hershele . . ." she said. "Do you see how the little lake has swollen? The eve of Passover it turns into an ocean! We must fetch the vessels and scour and purify them here."

"It's late, Mamma. Let's go home."

"Yes, we'll go soon. I'll be through in a moment." She bent over her book again. The girl put her mouth close to Herman's ear. "What did she say to you?" she whispered.

"She's far away."

"Where?"

"Back in the Old Country. . . ."

A gust of wind had turned the pages in the old lady's book and she could not find her place. She became confused, and read snatches here and there, riffling the pages.

"God said, 'I have sworn to give you the land of Israel for your inheritance.' Rabbi Bechaya says . . . 'Not a single locust remained in the land of Egypt, for even the locusts that the Egyptians had salted away for food revived and flew off, in order that the Egyptians might have no joy of them . . .' And God set a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night before the host of Israel to light the way through the desert to Canaan. . . ."

The girl cautiously looked over the old lady's shoulder. She saw the strange markings in the book. Again she whispered to Herman, "What is she reading?"

"Now she's even farther away than she she was before."

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"Where?"

"In the Bible. In Egypt . . . In Canaan."

"'And I shall give ye bread from heaven.' For they made bread out of the manna, and the manna was like coriander seed, and it was white, and as sweet as honey. . . ."

Herman enjoyed the girl's astonishment. "Now she's wandering in the desert between Egypt and the Promised Land, and she's eating manna from heaven," he explained.

"Holy Jesus!" the girl cried out.

The exclamation in the strange tongue startled the old lady out of the Exodus. She raised her head and became aware of the stranger. With a look of amazement on her face, she examined her from head to foot: copper hair, fair skin, tight blue sweater, dark blue jeans.

"What is she doing there, the *shickseh*? Has she come to milk the cow?" Herman smiled down at her. "Yes," he said.

The old lady's voice was emphatic. "See to it that she uses the milk pail for Passover. The Passover earthen jars are in the cellar."

"All right," Herman promised his mother-in-law, and smiled at Maureen.

AT DAWN, immediately after opening the store, Herman untied the bundles of morning papers. In the gray light he read the headlines: "JEWS IN PALESTINE PROCLAIM INDEPENDENT STATE—SEVEN ARAB STATES DECLARE WAR." He filled the silex with water and coffee, lit the gas, and returned to his newspaper. Seven Arab countries had declared war against the young state: Egypt, Syria, Trans-Jordan, Lebanon . . . Iraq . . . Saudi Arabia . . . Yemen. . . . Where on earth is Yemen? Brigades of the Arab Legion . . . are rolling rapidly toward Jerusalem. . . .

He glanced at the maps in the paper. In his imagination the land looked like the wild country around Bay Village: hills, valleys, swamps, dunes. Where is Jerusalem? Up there on the hill Maureen was standing. "They call him the Fighting Irishman," she had said about her father. Since their first meeting six weeks before, when she came back to the store with him and the old lady, she had not shown up. He had half thought of dropping in at Bay Village and looking for her there.

Soon the early morning parade of familiar faces began with workers who had to punch the clock in Manhattan and Queens. Then office workers hurried in, mostly girls, and salesmen toting their large suitcases of samples. There were always some housewives, out early to catch department store bargains.

The first one to appear was the old lady. She came in from her room behind the store, and went upstairs to her morning ritual of water poured over her hands, a murmured prayer, a bite to eat. Then she reappeared in the store. She took a quick look around. "What is that light in the corner burning for? It's already broad daylight!" she said. "What are we, Rockefellers?"

From the room above the store came the sound of Michael's high-pitched voice and quick child's steps. Sylvia appeared, and busied herself behind the counter. Her husband needed help—always a dreamer! Around ten o'clock, the neighbors and business people from nearby strolled in for the morning paper or refreshing glass of seltzer. Today they all stood around with an air of excitement.

"America has recognized Israel, everything will be O.K." Mr. Berg, from the shoe store across the street, assured everyone.

"If forty-nine countries have voted for a Jewish state, the world is still a world, not a jungle," someone else remarked, alluding to the UN decision.

"Who said it's a jungle?"

"What about the Arabs?"

"Looks like the Egyptians have forgotten the ten plagues, huh?"

"I'm telling you, people, it's the Time of the Messiah!"

Old Sonya Gottlieb sat on a chair in the sun in front of the door. Had the Messianic Age come at last? There had been talk of it in her *shul*. When the Messiah came, the ram's horn would sound, the dead would rise from their graves. Her Mendel, may he rest in peace, would rise too, and he and she and all the Jews would cross over a bridge of paper to the Land of Israel. But first off, Mendel would drop into the store for a glass of plain seltzer. On hot days it would bring him back to life. And after, they would go with all the other Jews to Israel. But on the other hand what's the hurry? How about the store? Just get up and rush off? How hard they worked to build up a little business! The Messiah would wait a while longer—does he have any other business, the Messiah?

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A cool wind blew into Avenue U from the ocean. The trees on the corner rustled quietly. It was a long time since Mendel had had his favorite "plain seltzer." . . . The bridge would be longer than the Brooklyn Bridge, but it would be all of paper. . . . She fell into a doze, and when she awakened it was to hear Mr. Dickman saying from the store, "If you just happened to have a thousand shares of General Motors, Herman! That would be even a better business than a candy store!"

"What is a candy store? A candy store is a penny business!" sighed Mrs. Sonya. "Still, *kreplach* in a dream are a dream—not *kreplach*."

Early in the afternoon, Mrs. Kaplan came in, as was her habit, to read the exciting serials in Sonya's *Morning Journal*. Oh, my, the things she read there! All about the lovely Queen Esther, and the famous philosopher, Nathan the Wise, and about the jealous brothers who sold poor Joseph into slavery in Egypt, and about Princess Veronica, who had a love affair with that scoundrel Titus (may his memory be blotted out!); and how Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph, the Righteous, and how he escaped from her hands, and how the gangster, Al Capone, and his crony, Dillinger, had broken out of jail in Chicago. Why even Mendel, peace to his soul, had maintained while he was alive that Mrs. Kaplan had a head on her shoulders, and Sonya Gottlieb rejoiced to see her. Here at last was someone you could talk to.

"What do you think of the news?" she demanded of Mrs. Kaplan.

"You mean about the Jewish state?"

"What else?"

"Of course, it's a great thing, the Messianic Age, as they say. But it's really not *news!*"

"Why not news?"

"Because in Lakewood they knew it already a long time ago!"

Twice yearly, at Passover and Rosh Hashanah, Mrs. Kaplan and her husband Sam, "the cutter," made a pilgrimage to Lakewood, to the Cedars Hotel. Their children, American-born, well off, loving, wanted their father to retire. But Sam refused. Why, said he, should he retire? There is time, he said. Soon, he said, he will be able to retire from the union, and have his check respectfully mailed to him home. So the children persuaded Sam to go with Mamma to Lakewood, at their expense, for the two holiday seasons. And Mrs. Kaplan, the rest of the year, kept describing the marvels of that resort. Until well into the summer she lingered over the previous Passover, and from August on she commenced with the High Holy Days, which were practically upon us.

"How did they know in Lakewood about the Jewish state?" asked old Sonya Gottlieb.

"You're questioning Lakewood? Why, all the biggest people—the newspapermen, the actors, the politicians—they all spend their vacations in Lakewood, and they all stay at the Cedars. You should have been there last time. . . ."

As the ladies sat in front, sunning themselves and talking, the life of the store went on. Herman waited on the customers, Sylvia took care of placing the orders with the salesmen—could you rely on Herman in such things? His head was in the clouds, Sylvia said repeatedly, without rancor. Now everyone had paused to comfort Michael, who had come in crying, with a bruised bloody knee. Sylvia, harassed, scolded, and comforted in the same breath.

Mrs. Kaplan had raised her head from the *Morning Journal* and "The Mysteries of the Temple of Babylon." She offered her advice: "Do you know what I think, Sylvia? If you'd listen to me, you'd get somebody to take care of Michael several hours a day, a girl. Can you tear yourself in ten pieces?"

"Who can afford even a high school girl these days?" Sylvia argued.

"A candy store is a penny business," old Sonya Gottlieb sighed.

Herman, standing behind the counter, thought of Maureen. She had gotten along so well with Michael that evening, when she had come back with him and the old lady. Sylvia had grown exhausted waiting and, seeing her mother safe, had suddenly burst into sobs. Maureen had spontaneously taken over Michael, washing and feeding him. She read him a bedtime story. But where was she now, Maureen?

Although it was not yet hot, a fair crowd filled the store in the early evening hours. Monotonously, and like an echo of past summers, the orders sounded in Herman's ears: "A plate of ice cream!" "An ice cream soda—black and white!" "A coke!" Around nine o'clock the store started to empty. Sylvia,

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looking dull, went up to go to bed. Herman half-dozed behind the counter. It was eleven o'clock when he roused himself. It was time to close. As he reached to put out the last light, he heard a soft rattling at the door. He turned, and saw a silhouette against the barred glass. He recognized Maureen, and walked to the door to reopen it.

"I was baby-sitting in the neighborhood and thought I'd drop in. Am I too late?"

Maureen speedily made herself at home in the candy store. At first she dropped in for only a few hours a day, mostly late afternoons. She helped out at all sorts of odd jobs, and went with Michael to Marine Park. Before anyone knew how it happened, she was keeping longer hours, waiting on customers in the evenings, serving ice cream sodas, selling cigarettes and newspapers. Soon she was trusted with the cash register.

Old Mrs. Gottlieb looked on the girl's progress in the store with approval. "In the house of the Rabbi, even the Gentile servant girl may pass on religious questions," she thought to herself. But Herman? Herman was not one of those men who have a fit whenever they see a pretty girl. Naturally, you don't open the door to the devil and invite him in, as the saying goes. But on the other hand, if your fate is to drown, you'll drown in a spoonful of water, and it doesn't have to be a blond shickseh, either.

Sylvia was at first distrustful and rather cold. It wasn't that she minded having Maureen around the house, helping with Michael or lending a hand in the kitchen. But in the business? Who is she? Does anybody know anything about her? Other doubts assailed Sylvia, the secret doubts which the heart fails to tell the lips. Herman was still a young man, not even thirty, and Maureen in her tight slacks and her clinging sweater, with disheveled hair—it's the way Mama says, Sylvia thought: "Don't crawl into a sickbed when your head doesn't ache."

True, Herman never had been much of a hand at those things. Sylvia knew him from way back. And then after they were married —when, actually, has there even been enough *time*? For Herman was up early every morning, while it was still dark. And at night, when the store was finally closed, it was late. They watched the store in shifts evenings. Coming upstairs after her shift, she would find him dead to the world. Still later, when his shift was done, she was dozing off, or if not dozing, too tired. Still, before they could look around, she had had Michael, and she would have liked a second. But she preferred to wait. First, they ought to set themselves up, new furniture, a television set, then think about a proper apartment, eventually a house of their own. How long were they to live over the store? And she had to carry the whole burden of their future on her shoulders. Herman worked in harness, that was all he was capable of. She knew her Herman. Still, the way Mama says, "When a lion sleeps, let him sleep."

"God will help," sighed Mrs. Kaplan.

"Yes," said Mrs. Gottlieb, "but as the saying is, 'If only God would help until he helps!' "

The two women were sitting together in front of the store. It was the beginning of fall and the tree on the corner was starting to turn gold. Single leaves fluttered down in the wind.

Mrs. Kaplan was talking politics. "You think Israel couldn't handle them? One at a time she could take care of: she'd take care of Egypt in a hurry, and she'd teach the Syrians a lesson they would tell their children about unto the tenth generation. But they are seven countries, the Arabs—seven of them!"

Mrs. Gottlieb agreed. "As they say, 'Only one God and so many enemies!' "

"Do you mean it's only the Arabs? It's *not* only the Arabs! Didn't you read the paper?"

The papers? But they were already in the month of Elul, and early every morning the *shofar* was blown; even a fish in the water would tremble. Every free minute Mrs. Gottlieb would look into her Woman's Bible. Of what use were the papers to her? . . .

Mrs. Kaplan even read the editorials. Now she launched out into international politics. "It isn't only the Arabs, you understand, it's more—it's high politics: Russia, America, England. You know, there are only two that have any say in the world, our America and Russia, and each wants to be the boss—do you get it, Mrs. Sonya—and Israel is in the middle."

Mrs. Sonya nodded her head: an old story, nothing new. From all eternity it had been like this. Does she need to read the papers for this? It's written in the Woman's Bible:

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"And it was in the time of Ahasuerus. . . . This Ahasuerus was one of the ten kings who ruled over all the world and will still rule. Here they are: the first is the King of Kings, The Holy One, Blessed be He, His Kingdom should soon come again for us! The second is Nimrod, the third is Pharaoh, the King of Egypt, the fourth is Solomon, King of Israel, the fifth is Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, the sixth is Ahasuerus, the seventh is Alexander, the King of Greece, the eighth is the King of Rome, the ninth is the King Messiah, the tenth will be the King of Kings, the Holy One, Blessed be He, we hope that His Kingdom will soon come for us. . . ."

"Mrs. Sonya, are you sleeping?"

The voice of Sarah Kaplan woke her from her daydream. She startled and raised her head: "Who is sleeping? I'm sleeping? I'm not sleeping!"

Mrs. Kaplan sighed. "Ach, maybe, as they say, it's the time of the Messiah, but still one doesn't get any younger. You know what I think? You too should drop in at Lakewood for a few weeks, and rest your bones at the Cedars. We are going this year for three weeks, until after Succoth, if God is willing. What should I tell you?—Well, Rosh Hashanah is a real Holy Day there: there's a regular shul, they blow the shofar. . . ."

Mrs. Sonya let her head fall. She half listened and half saw hazy images that emerged from her memory. Yes, it's already the month of Elul, and they're blowing the shofar. People are going to the graves of their forefathers. The Old Cemetery is in the courtyard and there are three synagogues around it, the old one, the new one, and the wooden shul with the turrets. But in the Old Cemetery there are only the graves of those long dead. Now they go up Synagogue Street to the New Cemetery. Women stand by the graves and speak aloud to their dead, unburdening their hearts. "Merciful God, Who art in Heaven, give rest to the soul of . . ." intones the cantor.

". . . but Succoth is the time of entertainment," it is Sarah Kaplan's voice now continuing. "Then they bring talent to the Cedars from the Yiddish theater world in New York: singers, actors, all kinds of comedians. They sing 'The Wheels Turn and the Years Go,' it tugs at your heart, and they tell such funny stories to make you burst with laughter. . . ."

. . . And here is the barracks of the volunteer firemen, Mrs. Sonya murmured to herself. Near the pond in the middle of the market, where they used to put plays on, "Reisele, the Shohet's Daughter," and "The Sale of Joseph." Schmerl, the tailor, would dress up like a woman and play Potiphar's wife and Queen Esther, and Ahasuerus would clap a sheepskin on his chin for a beard.

". . . The lake and the woods," Mrs. Kaplan continued enthusiastically. "They stuff you at the Cedars with the tastiest dishes, especially on Succoth: borscht with marrowbones, gefilte fish, stuffed derma, stuffed neck. Then comes the chicken, fried, boiled, as one wishes. You think you are finished? Now they start with the meat! A fine piece of potted chuck, boiled flanken. . . . So what to do after such a meal? After such a meal, you go out for a walk in the woods surrounding the lake. It's not for nothing that Lakewood is called Lakewood. It's a real lake, and a real wood!"

"Yassidoveh!" thinks Mrs. Sonya, and she sees the lake near her home town, and the thick woods around it. At the end of spring they go out in small groups to gather berries, and in the fall they pick nuts from the trees, filberts and big walnuts. The shore of the lake is overgrown with dark thickets, reeds and pussy willows, and willow trees grow there too. At the very edge of the lake stands the mill, a water mill. The water flows over the wheel and turns the millstones. Reb Shmuel, the miller, has three daughters, and they have a stepmother, a cross-eyed woman, Reb Shmuel's second wife. Nearby, in the hamlet, a stork is standing on a high tree; he stands on one foot.

"Then, in the afternoon, you take a nap, and toward evening, toward suppertime, you walk around the lake again," continued Mrs. Kaplan.

"And the mill?" asked Mrs. Gottlieb.

"What mill?"

"The water mill near the pond. . . ."

"What in the world are you talking about? What pond? And how can there be a water mill in Lakewood? There are no water mills in America. In America, the mills all run by electricity. You are dreaming."

"Yes, yes . . . electricity . . ." murmured

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Mrs. Gottlieb. She shook off her daydream, lifted her head, and looked around with amazed eyes.

"It's a good thing we made a reservation at the Cedars in plenty of time," said Mrs. Kaplan. "On the eve of a Holy Day there's such a rush you couldn't get a room for a thousand dollars!"

"It's good you reminded me," said Mrs. Gottlieb. "I have not reserved my ticket at the shul. I'll go this afternoon to the shul. Between the afternoon prayer and the evening prayer, the *shammes* will not fail to be there."

THE shammes was in the basement of the shul, waiting for a *minyan* for the afternoon prayer. Upstairs, on the first floor, sat four elderly men. They also waited for the minyan. The shammes welcomed Mrs. Gottlieb heartily, almost as if she could help make the minyan. "I was thinking of you. I was thinking Mrs. Gottlieb will drop in any day," and he placed a chair for her.

"Thank you," she said, and sat down. "Only a short way, it seems, but the feet get tired. You have, I suppose so, left a ticket for me?"

"What a question!" He took out a notebook from a table drawer. "What location will you take this year?"

"As usual. High. In the gallery."

The shammes placed a mark on the seating plan. "I'll bring the ticket to your house."

"Good," said Mrs. Gottlieb. She understood. At the same time he would bring her a bottle of Mount Carmel wine. It was part of his business to sell Mount Carmel wine for the holidays. He was also a teacher in a religious school.

"And how do they treat you in America?" Mrs. Gottlieb asked.

"One makes a living. Thanks to God. I don't complain." During the war years he had been in Europe, confined in the concentration camps. He had been saved by a miracle, and lived to wander from one DP camp to another. Mrs. Gottlieb liked to talk to him. He told her about the camps, how he had lived through the seven places of hell, how the Nazi killers had murdered the Jews in the Old Country. He talked willingly, and as she listened, she wiped the tears from her eyes.

"Come in more often," he said.

MORE and more gold appeared in the green foliage of the trees, and a cooler wind blew from the bays in South Marine Park. The shammes brought the ticket and the bottle of Mount Carmel wine. Mrs. Gottlieb invited him to sit and drink a cup of coffee. As he lifted his cup, his sleeve fell back and a number was visible—ciphers burned into the flesh. He spoke of the destruction of his town, and Mrs. Gottlieb visualized her own town of Lipsk, destroyed: they take the old rabbi first, and ten citizens, important citizens and plain Jews—Yankel Zak, Moshe Leib the grain merchant from the market, Moshe Gershels the coachman, Gabriel the smith, and Benjamin the capmaker—they take them on the road to Yassidoveh and shoot them near an open ditch; they throw child and father into the old Russian monastery; they deport them in sealed trains; concentration camps; gas chambers. She heard the words of the shammes and knew they were true. Yet she knew also Lipsk was standing in its place: with the rabbi, the important citizens from the market, the tailors, the shoemakers, the blacksmith, the coachmen. And when the shammes left, she walked into her room, put the ticket in the table drawer, took the Woman's Bible and went upstairs.

She poured water on her hands and went to sit at the window with her book. She glanced down at the street and, as if she were looking down from the women's balcony in the shul, she seemed to see below her the congregation of Lipsk, sitting in the old synagogue and reciting "Lamentations." The worshippers sat, without shoes, on the floor, rocking back and forth, and wailing over the destruction of the Temple:

"And he hath burned in Jacob like a flaming fire,
Which devoureth round about.
He hath bent his bow like an enemy . . .
The youth and the old man lie
On the ground in the streets;
My virgins and my young men
Are fallen by the sword;
Thou hast allowed the enemy to slay them in the day of Thine anger;
Thou, God, hast allowed the slaughter unsparingly."

Later in the afternoon, Maureen appeared. Maureen enjoyed calling the old lady Mrs.

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Sonya, and the two often found themselves alone in the upstairs apartment. One word leading to another, they would end up talking about higher matters, about the world and God. Mrs. Sonya was struck with amazement; imagine, a Gentile girl who knew all the stories in the Woman's Bible! Apparently *they* believed in the patriarchs and matriarchs, too: Father Abraham, Father Isaac, Father Jacob, Mother Rachel. The only thing was, they had changed the names a little.

Why, Maureen even knew about Joseph the Righteous. Only she called him Saint Joseph. So it would seem that the old Italian barber, Joe the Bookie, was named after Joseph the Righteous! Was it for that that he ran away from Potiphar's wife and languished in jail the best years of his life, poor thing? It would be interesting to find out whether Maureen knew the story about Potiphar's wife, too, and how she had tried to seduce Joseph the Righteous. But it was not seemly to talk to Maureen about such things —she was still too young. But who could tell? . . . As they say, "An experienced bride gets down on her back by herself."

In the evening, an odd suspicion occurred to Mrs. Gottlieb. She came into the store unexpectedly and found Herman alone with Maureen. They were doing nothing, God forbid, but the moment she entered, a sudden silence fell, and a look passed between them. Mrs. Sonya stared distrustfully: what business did Herman have with her? The figure of Potiphar's wife rose before Mrs. Sonya, holding the torn hem of Joseph's coat in her hand.

And now that she was reminded of Potiphar's wife, Mrs. Sonya's thoughts bore her off to the land of Egypt. At first she found reasons to excuse the poor sinful woman: her husband must have been something of a fool—a eunuch, after all! . . . But was Joseph responsible for her Potiphar being a eunuch? Listen here, woman: if your husband's no good to you, divorce him and be done! And if you must take yourself a lover, why pick on Joseph the Righteous? Take some healthy prizefighter, a fat Italian, some janitor, or a six-foot-tall Irishman, a street cleaner. But no, just anyone wouldn't do! *She* had to have Joseph the Righteous! . . .

Very soon Maureen left. Mrs. Sonya remained in the store a while longer. She wanted to have a heart-to-heart talk with Herman. But he was lost in his newspaper. What could he be reading about? But what kind of dealings was he having with that blond Gentile girl? All at once, Mrs. Sonya felt lonely and old. She went into her room, and, as she turned down the quilt and fluffed up her pillows, she recited the bed-time prayer with devotion. But, though Michael would be at her right side and Gabriel at her left, Uriel and Raphael, she would still be alone, all alone in an alien world.

WHEN she opened her eyes again, the four walls of her room were still shrouded in darkness. She caught a light rustle in the adjacent room and lifted her head. Muffled steps were moving about in the candy store. A door creaked, opened, and shut. It must be the shammes waking folks up for the Penitential Prayers. Her Mendel had already left. But how could he have left for the Penitential Prayers when he was dead? she wondered. It was the Messianic Age, she decided; that was it. King Solomon's Throne had been sent from the White House to the Land of Israel, where they would soon be rebuilding the Holy Temple, and then the King Messiah would reign over the whole world. And when the Messiah came, a great ram's horn would blow: *Tu-tu!* The Great Alarm blown in shul on the Days of Awe! And the dead would rise from their graves. . . .

The sound of the ram's horn roused Mrs. Sonya from her sleep. If they were blowing the ram's horn, that was a sign that it was the month of Elul, and time to pay your respects to your dead in the graveyard.

She rose and lit the small night lamp by her bed. A meager light flickered, odd shadows danced on the walls. Slowly and carefully, she dressed. How to find the way there? The main thing was to get to Lakewood first. Lakewood was where the pond was. Once she got to Lakewood, she knew the way; on one side of the pond grew bulrushes and reeds, on the other stood the water mill. The water fell down the sluices to turn the arms of the mill. Then she must take the left-hand path, past the farmhands' cottages, past the Russian Church monastery. Or ought she perhaps take the path through the fields? It was shorter. Then you took the path leading to the bathhouse street. There was a stream flowing on the

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right, and the bathhouse stood on the left. The chimney of the bathhouse was pouring smoke. Shmerel, the bath man with the wooden foot, had probably lighted the oven —all the Jews visit the bathhouse on the eve of the High Holy Days. Why, there was Gabriel the blacksmith's cottage; he had been a widower for eight years, and they were talking up a betrothal between him and a certain widow from Suchowolie. Across the way Moshe Gershels, the coachman, lived with his five sons. Who was it who lived in the green house with the balcony? That must be Benjamin the capmaker, who has to travel around from fair to fair all the year, poor fellow! And here's the bridge already, and the market on the other side. In the distance you can see the shul courtyard with the three synagogues clustered around it: the new house of study, the old house of study, and the wooden shul with the turrets.

But she must not forget to take along her copy of the Woman's Bible! Here is the ticket! . . . But what would she need a ticket for? The Lipsk people worshipped without having to buy tickets. Well, you never know. . . . Look here, she'll need some change, too. There's a long table in the shul anteroom with a line of good-will offering plates on it; one for Rabbi Mayer the Miracle Worker, one for the Hostel of Righteousness Society, one for the Society of Visitors of the Sick, one for the Bridal Fund Society, one for the Talmudic Academies Fund, and one for the Poor Folks Alms Society. . . .

The market place is dark, the surrounding houses are locked, their shutters barred. The shammes walks from house to house, his stick knocking against the cobblestones of the street. His knuckles rap against the barred shutters. "To Penitential Prayers! All Jews, to Penitential Prayers!"

The ram's horn was, perhaps, the shofar of Messiah, but the steps—that was Herman and Maureen who also ran away, together, the same night.

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THE MIDDLE YEARS OF HENRY ADAMS

Women in His Life and Novels

EDWARD N. SAVETH

THE second volume of Ernest Samuels' leisurely biography of Henry Adams (*Henry Adams: The Middle Years,* Harvard University Press, $6.50) is a book to delight the Adams buff, whose number, these days of despair, is legion. A biography in the "life and times" tradition, carefully researched, well-integrated, and presenting a mass of data in a readable style that does not reflect the clutter of the author's strenuous investigations—it deserves all the high praise reviewers have showered upon it. What with this biography and another rumored to be in preparation, besides everything else that has been published, Henry Adams bids fair to emerge as a better-documented man than the presidents among his ancestors, of whom he always stood more than a little in awe.

Professor Samuels' earlier volume, *The Young Henry Adams,* took the grandson of John Quincy and the great-grandson of John from his birth in 1838 in Boston, through Harvard, service as his father's secretary in the London Embassy during the Civil War, and back to America, which, following the war, had become enormously rich and corrupt and from which Henry Adams, brahmin of brahmins, felt entirely alienated. The book went on to deal with Adams's residence in Washington; his efforts as a journalist to expose the dastardy of the politicos who congregated around Grant and the gross manipulations of some spectacularly dishonest businessmen; his participation in the ill-fated reformist Liberal Republican movement; teaching at Harvard; editorship of the *North American Review,* and marriage to Marian Hooper.

Concerning the years embraced by the second volume, Adams wrote in the *Education:* "Education had ended in 1871, life was complete in 1890." Adams had resigned from Harvard and from the editorship of the *North American Review* and had gone with his wife to live in Washington, near Lafayette Square and overlooking the White House. This was Adams's most productive period as a historian, in which he wrote biographies of Gallatin and Randolph (a biography of Burr was never printed) and the nine-volume *History of the United States during the Jefferson and Madison Administrations,* which students of American historiography regard as a classic. In addition, Adams wrote two novels, *Democracy* and *Esther,* the authorship of which he concealed.

All of this was done amidst the graces and comforts of patrician living made possible by inherited wealth. The Adamses' household was the vortex of a Washington social whirl the details of which, Tyler Dennett pointed out twenty-five years ago in his biography of John Hay, made an intriguing chapter in American history—a chapter which Mr. Samuels has now written. At this time the city of Washington was losing much of its provincial flavor. The streets were being paved; the hand of H. H. Richardson was apparent in the architecture of private homes; and something of an international society was beginning to emerge. At the pinnacle of this society were the Adamses, their friends the John Hays, and

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EDWARD N. SAVETH's previous article on Henry Adams ("Henry Adams: Waning of America's Patriciate") appeared in our October 1957 number. Mr. Saveth, who has written often for COMMENTARY, is the author of two books on American historiography and is at present working on a study of the 19th-century patricians. He teaches at Rutgers and is currently director of a manpower utilization project for the National Social Welfare Assembly.

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that eccentric genius, Clarence King. The Five of Hearts they called themselves, and theirs was an exclusiveness difficult to define. The barriers were indeed high, but not impenetrable to kindred spirits regardless of wealth or station. "Money," said Adams, "plays no part whatever in Society, but cleverness counts for a good deal, and social capacity for more." Adams was wrong, of course, about money—but not too wrong if we take into consideration the state of the worldly fortunes of King, whom Adams thought "the most brilliant man of his generation." However, with a salon that left out more people than it took in, the Adamses and the Hays felt that their society was too good for what Washington had to offer. Henry James in his "Pandora" had Bonnycastle, modelled after Adams, say: "Let us be vulgar and have some fun—let us invite the President."

The re-creation of an era in Washington social life during the Hayes, Garfield, and Arthur administrations, when the curtain of corruption was rising following the Grant nadir, is a triumph of historic writing for Mr. Samuels. The vividness with which he brings the period to life is the result, in part, of the author's use of the Adams papers which are now in the possession of the Massachusetts Historical Society. True, the main outlines of the story are not altered by the papers. But because of them, there has been added a dimension of detail which Tyler Dennett, working without the papers a quarter of a century ago, had been unable to contribute to his notable biography of John Hay. Here and there, one wishes that a portrait had been drawn more closely, as in the case of Elizabeth Cameron, the ridiculously young, beautiful wife of the old Pennsylvania spoilsman Senator Don Cameron. Mr. Samuels is rather literal-minded in his approach to an understanding of the relationship between Mrs. Cameron and Adams, not advancing a step beyond where his footnotes take him. This is one point at which the author's devotion to documentation may be a little defeating.

I remember once hearing Mr. R. P. Blackmur of Princeton discuss, on the basis of a mere quickening of the style of the *Education* when it came to deal with Mrs. Cameron, as well as other evidence, his ideas of the relationship between Adams and her. It is this kind of imaginativeness which I find lacking on occasion in Mr. Samuels' work. I wish, too, that the peculiar problem of the patrician in the context of late 19th century America had been taken up. But one must draw the line somewhere, even in a three-volume work, and Mr. Samuels' judgment is almost unexceptional.

Although Mr. Samuels treats briefly the anti-Semitism of Henry Adams, he is correct in putting off its evaluation to a later volume. Adams's anti-Semitic utterances grow in number and intensity in the period after that covered by this volume.*

MR. SAMUELS does not hazard a plunge beyond the footnotes and into the depths of his subject's emotional life. This is in some degree understandable since it would be unfortunate to hitch a major work to a psychological thesis that might seem attractive today and prove a dud in a decade. Mr. Samuels is to be congratulated for having turned out a book that avoids the obscurantism of John Berryman's *Stephen Crane*. On the other hand, he is chary of even ankle-deep wading the Freudian waters. What I miss here is the discreet and controlled use of Freudian techniques characteristic of Leon Edel's treatment of Henry James.

Somewhere in the *Education*, Adams wrote: "The only absolute truth was the subconscious chaos below, which everyone could feel when he sought it." Adams drew back from probing the subconscious, with the excuse that it was the most painful process he knew. After his wife's suicide, he destroyed the diaries of his youth with the comment that he was "horrified to have such a record so long in existence. My brain reels with the vividness of emotions more than thirty years old."

*Interested readers may see my own essay on Henry Adams's anti-Semitism in the *Contemporary Jewish Record* (June 1945).

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Still, we are not entirely without clues as to Adams's deeper emotions. In *The Young Henry Adams*, Mr. Samuels described Adams's early pessimism about life, his feelings of unworthiness and inadequacy, and the sense of gloom and foreboding that his mother communicated to him. Samuels also related how Adams needed to be dominated by a woman. The first of the series of such women was his sister Louisa, who died as the result of a carriage accident. Adams, grieving at her bedside, was fascinated by the perverse charm of the death drama unfolding before him. "Death took features altogether new. . . . Nature enjoyed it, played with it, the horror added to her charm, she liked the torture and smothered the victim with caresses." He wrote of his sister's death as "a nightmare, an insanity of force. For the first time, the stage scenery of the senses collapsed; the human mind felt itself stripped naked, vibrating in a void of shapeless energies, with resistless mass, colliding, crushing, wasting and destroying what these same energies had created and labored from eternity to perfect."

It was not just any woman to whom Adams handed over the reins of his life. It had to be a woman powerful enough to take them up. When Adams visited Chartres in 1896, he began "to feel the Virgin or Venus as force"; not taste, nor art, nor beauty, but force. This was to articulate an attitude which Adams felt and hinted at earlier. Compared to the American woman, Adams once wrote, jokingly and also in dead earnest, the American man was a "chump" who wanted to be ruled by her; "a peaceful, domestic animal, fond of baby-talk" and who yearned for "love and doughnuts."

The strength of Adams's heroines lay in an emotional depth and intuitive power which were both incomprehensible to male rationality and also superior to it. Adams had slight respect for women's minds which, he said, are "a queer mixture of odds and ends, poorly mastered and utterly unconnected." He judged his wife as having a "very active and quick mind that has run over many things, but she really knows nothing well." Marian could have written neither the *History* nor the *Education*, but her strength was nonetheless apparent in ways that did not involve intellectuality; her good taste in clothes and furnishings; in her manner as a hostess in her drawing room; in her instinctive sense of what was fitting and what was not. Finally, there was Marian's barbed and deadly sense of humor that bubbled up unexpectedly and inexplicably. Once she chided her father, Dr. Robert Hooper, about her faulty training in foreign languages which left the "sexes of my nouns as undecided as that of Oscar Wilde." Yet she forgave him this and other well-meant mistakes in her upbringing and education and promised not to "bite off your ear like that rude young man in Aesop who was the terror of my younger days."

Marian's mother died when she was very young and she was brought up and educated by her father. From him she derived qualities of independence and self-assuredness which Adams so much admired, but which may have been very defeating to him. The ties between Marian and her father were very close and each week Marian wrote him a letter about what went on in Washington. Adams never said what his attitude was toward this father-daughter relationship, but there is a section in Adams's novel *Esther* (Marian was the model for Esther) in which Esther's father, facetiously but with an undercurrent of strong feeling, describes his attitude toward the man Esther might some day marry: "I have hated this fellow all his life. About twice a year I have treacherously stabbed him in the back as he was going out of his own front door. I know that he would interfere with my comfort if I let him get a footing. After all he was a poor creature, and did not deserve to live."

Discussing this passage, Mr. Samuels conjectures that Adams may have felt guilty when his father-in-law died because Adams may have wished his death. This may be so, but the real problem the passage suggests is the conflict between Adams and father—a conflict that could have impaired his effectiveness as a husband.

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A few months after her father's death, Marian had a breakdown which resulted in her suicide. Father had triumphed over husband from the grave. Adams did not possess the emotional strength to break Marian's attachment to her father and once he died Adams could not prevent her following him.

LARGELY unrecognized by Mr. Samuels is Henry Adams's penchant for the strong, destructive woman whose image he recreated in a variety of forms. This is true of Adams's novels which Samuels interprets as had Robert Spiller before him. *Democracy* is presented as an attack on the forces of corruption which Adams feared would undermine the Republic; *Esther* as an account of the conflict between reason and established religion. This is a valid account of the intellectual content of the novels, but Adams is also talking about the emotional lives of the two central characters: Madeline Lee of *Democracy* and Esther. *Democracy*, published in 1876, deals with corruption in post-Civil War Washington and the action centers about Madeline's determination to learn about the workings of the democratic system. Madeline, when she arrives in Washington, is an attractive woman of thirty, whose husband and young son are both dead. A typical Adams heroine, she stands alone in the world, and no man can have her. Not Silas P. Ratcliffe, who, even before she knew of his corrupt political background, Madeline wanted "to turn . . . inside out; to experiment on him as young physiologists use frogs and kittens"; nor the more principled Carrington, a ruined man from a ruined family, who is just weak enough to interest Madeline.

Weak enough to make Madeline secure in confessing to him—a confession we could never imagine her making to the virile and active Ratcliffe—that a certain destructiveness in her nature prevented her from loving. "You do not know how much misery I am saving you," she tells Carrington in rejecting his offer of marriage. "I have no heart to give. You want a young, fresh life. . . . If you married me, you would destroy yourself. You would wake up some day and find the universe dust and ashes." Madeline's loving sister Sybil adds this warning: "You wouldn't like her . . . if you married her; she has always had her own way, and she could not help taking it; she could never learn to take yours, both of you would be unhappy in a week."

If she did love, Madeline makes plain, it would be because of an "ambitious thirst for power, restless eagerness to meddle in what did not concern her"; or "to escape from the torture of watching other women with full lives and satisfied instincts, while her own life was hungry and sad." Finally, Madeline expresses strong feelings of self-contempt. She tells of her "hysterical dread of sorrow and suffering"; "narrow sympathies"; and "abject cowardice." "Life," she says at one point, is a "vile thing," and adds: "Oh how I wish I were dead! How I wish the universe were annihilated."

This attitude of destructiveness Madeline projects outward toward institutions as well as men. As the novel progresses, Madeline becomes increasingly skeptical of democracy, which, she alleges, is destroying itself "with universal suffrage, corruption, and communism." The book ends with her rejecting suitors and pronouncing her great anathema against democracy. Democracy, says Madeline, "has shaken my nerves to pieces. Oh, what rest it would be to live in the Great Pyramid and look out forever at the polar star."

The plot of *Esther* centers on the love of two men for the heroine; the Reverend Stephen Hazard and the scientist George Strong. Esther tells Strong that she rejects him because of her love for Hazard. But the latter also fails in his suit, because the established church he serves is alien to Esther's agnostic upbringing which was in turn shaped by her father. (As was true of his wife Marian, Esther's mother dies when she is relatively young and she is brought up by her father.) In the end, Esther is as alone as Madeline Lee contemplating the polar star.

As in the case of Madeline, Esther is endowed by Adams with "more strength than

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men" as well as an "instinct of power." Like Madeline, too, Esther expresses strong feelings of self-degradation which are tied to an inability to love. Esther's rejection of Hazard is accompanied by the statement: "Now I am low enough, am I not? Don't make me feel more degraded than I am." For Hazard to win Esther, the latter makes plain, he must create a new and "spiritual" church, one that will not "cry: flesh-flesh-flesh! at every corner." The doctrine of the resurrection of the body is "shocking" to Esther because, she tells Hazard, "I despise and loathe myself, and yet you thrust self at me from every corner of the church as though I loved and admired it." We pity Esther in a way that we never could pity the harsher Madeline, particularly when Esther says of the men around her: "I want to submit. Why can't some of you make me? For a few moments I think it is done, and then I suddenly find myself more deficient than ever."

THERE can be no doubt that Adams, who expected so much from women, had very bad luck with them. There was first, mother, whose favorite he was, and who, according to Henry's older brother Charles, took "a constitutional and sincere pleasure in the forecast of evil. She delighted in the dark side of anticipation." Then there was Louisa, his sister, the first woman to whom he entrusted the reins of his life. Finally, there was Marian who committed suicide—a suicide which was almost predictable from the development of the character of Esther. People "who detest their own identity," Adams generalized, "are prone to suicide," and Esther remarks, as Marian might have, that death "excites almost more than it frightens."

It is understandable, from both his experience with these tragedy-haunted women and his unconscious image of women, that Adams, although a relatively young widower at the time of Marian's death, should never have married again. Certainly, he was close to many fascinating, intelligent, and eligible women. But Adams preferred them as "nieces" and not as wives. As "uncle," Adams could be as near or as far as he desired from the destructiveness with which circumstances and his imagination endowed his heroines. "Uncle" had few of the responsibilities that husbands have thrust upon them. One of the more adored and more adoring nieces, Mabel La Farge, saw through to the core of her relationship with "Uncle Henry." This, she described, as "convenient and easy, capable of being anything or nothing at the will of either party, like a Mohammedan or Polynesian or American marriage."

"One of the games Adams played with his nieces was to pretend to be their little boy, and he wrote them winsome letters as their little 'dear Dordy,' a pet name they gave him"; Mr. Samuels buries this information in a footnote. My point is that data of this kind may be more relevant to an understanding of Adams than Mr. Samuels seems to think. As Mr. Samuels proceeds with his third volume, a hypothesis concerning Adams's emotional pattern will be increasingly relevant in explaining Adams's Mariolatry (the Virgin, Adams's strongest heroine, has many of the attributes of Madeline and Esther) and his increasing pessimism and feelings of destructiveness toward men, institutions, and the universe.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

UP GOETHE'S PATH

A Poem

ZALMAN SHNEOUR

ZALMAN SHNEOUR, who died on February 20, 1959, a contemporary of the Yiddish novelists Sholem Asch and I. J. Singer, was one of the major figures in modern Jewish literature. A prolific writer, the author of more than sixty volumes of Hebrew and Yiddish poetry and prose, he was at home in both languages.

Shneour, who was born in the Russian town of Shklov in 1887, was a member of a noted Hasidic family; his ancestor, Shneour Zalman of Lodi, was the founder of the rationalist movement within Hasidism known as Habad. After leaving Shklov he lived in Berlin, Warsaw, Vilna, Zurich, Geneva, Paris, London, and (after 1945) New York and Israel.

Shneour never achieved the international reputation outside of Jewish literature that one might expect from the strength of his writings. Only three of his novels were translated into English, and they had an indifferent success. (A French translation of his historical romance dealing with the Napoleonic period was greeted with more enthusiasm.) In 1946, Shneour's novels with a Shklov locale were dramatized and produced on the Yiddish stage by Maurice Schwartz.

Perhaps this talented writer met with general indifference because of the very qualities that set him apart from his contemporaries; his was a markedly individual voice, lyrical and violent, speaking in praise of heroic attitudes in an anti-heroic, socially-minded, ironic age.

"Up Goethe's Path" is from the Hebrew volume of verse, *Hezyonot,* published in Berlin in 1923. My translation of another excerpt from the same book, "Death of the Flowers," was published in COMMENTARY in May 1946.—JACOB SLOAN

AND the path winds wild and free as we go up from Torfhaus
Joined by a fickle brook running on ahead,
Now golden in the sun, now ravine-shadowed-blue,
Dozing in loose sand, or singing among stones.

Goethe walked this path when he was deep in *Faust,*
Climbing from Mount Brocken to the Witches' Altar.
This squirrel's forebear stood dumb at the poet's silence,
A branchy deer froze like a dry tree.

Then he reached the peak. Once there, he cast
His intellectual net over cities and states.
Generations' doubts gave him soul-selling Faust,
Germany Gretchen, the golden innocent.

The Scandinavian countryside yielded Walpurgis Night,
Compounded of thunder, songs, lightning, and black magic;

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All he took from Leipzig was one wine cellar,
From the pagan treasuries, Mephistopheles.

Out of the Greek plays he sucked honey chorus,
The contest between God and Satan out of the Book of Job.
Centuried artists sowed the field of Faust
For him to come along and pick a single grain.

And all these worlds at random, alien elements,
Gathering, he tied in a knotty form.
Linking the torn pieces of the immortals,
He passed whistling by, like a man crossing a bridge.

"I swear," he must have thought as he went up this path,
"I am the one for whom jubilees have toiled,
Scientific donkeys, histories and faiths—
All have died and rotted to manure my shoots."

"Every hill's a world. One world's enough for us!"
That's the ant heap's wisdom—but the eagle's different,
And the man of intellect. They two go laughing upward:
Mountain and abyss all the same to them.

I walk Goethe's path, Faust hovering above me,
Mount Brocken appearing, the path growing wilder.
All the foundations are ancient. Where are the new to come from?
I am impatient to rise, and cannot see the peak.

I search the side of the path; maybe the poet dropped
Some hint of the new combinations he formed when he went up alone.
Ponderous Germans galore have threshed here; but perhaps
One slight clue has escaped for the future artist.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

THE ROAD TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Planners in Search of a Theory

BERT F. HOSELITZ

PRECISELY how does a backward peasant society transform itself into a modern, technically advanced one? This question represents a new field of investigation for social scientists, whose studies have taken on political urgency since the end of World War II. For with the collapse of the old colonial empires, some two dozen Asian and African states have acquired political sovereignty and now seek, through more or less ambitious development programs, to achieve economic independence as well. But as the history of Latin America makes clear, the possession of natural resources together with a desire for modernization are not enough to establish a modern industrial society. A host of other factors are involved; and it is these factors that economists, historians, and sociologists are trying to identify.

The literature of economic development has passed through three distinct phases since the end of the war. First came the tracts and pamphlets which were designed to arouse popular interest in the reconstruction of devastated countries. We heard proposals to spend billions of dollars on development aid; to send technical missions to the four corners of the world; to establish scholarships and training fellowships for students from the poorer countries. There was little analysis in these writings of the reasons for economic backwardness, nor was any coherent theory developed of how it could be overcome.

After the administrators, politicians, journalists, and social scientists had exhausted their energies in exhortation, a general sobering took place. In the second, more analytical phase, Western social scientists began to elucidate a variety of theories of economic stagnation and development.

The Communists already had such a theory, based on Lenin's old ideas on imperialism. The colonial countries, said the Communists, were either pre-capitalist or had adopted features of incipient capitalism under imperial rule. But colonialism expropriated the masses and set up all sorts of barriers to the new middle classes. This sowed the seeds of anti-colonial revolts, which at first were led by the emerging middle and professional classes. The position of this native bourgeoisie was and is ambiguous. Because it exploits its own proletariat, it is "objectively" part of the imperialist camp; on the other hand, it propagates the nationalist ideas which erode imperialism. This contradiction creates political instability, paving the way for the Communist revolution which finally releases the country's productive forces for "socialist construction." Once in power, the native Communists can develop their countries' economies by imitating the policies of the Soviet Union: forced-draft industrialization, with a priority for capital equipment over consumer goods, and the whole process financed largely through restriction of consumption and state exactions on the peasantry.

This theory, though it is a potent political

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strategy, is hardly a sufficient guide to practical economic policies. It ignores the diversity of economic endowments in different countries, and "eliminates" by definition all social and cultural complexities. Its application to Eastern Europe has, on the whole, led to dismal results. The countries which are economically soundest there today—East Germany and Czechoslovakia—were also the most advanced before the Communists took power. In the less advanced countries where Stalinist development theories were pushed to their ultimate limit—Poland and Hungary—economic as well as political chaos resulted, and the manifold departures from orthodox Stalinist ideas in those countries since 1956 are the best commentary on their validity.

Western theorists were much less sure than the Communists about the "right solution" for underdeveloped countries. Most European and American scholars felt that the economic terms and categories of the advanced countries could be directly applied in studying the poorer ones, but a minority argued that entirely new concepts had to be worked out. There was no settling the argument between the two schools of thought, chiefly because there was little empirical data on the basis of which to judge. More research was clearly required to find out just how the people in underdeveloped countries did go about gaining their daily bread, what were their incentives and motives, social and political ties, forms of economic organization and division of labor.

In the current, third phase of economic-development literature, special studies are attempting to supply the empirical data previously lacking. These facts can be ordered in two ways. The first approach is historical. Since the advanced countries were once underdeveloped, their past may reveal important aspects of the process of economic development; if we could show that economic development is basically similar, say, in 18th-century France and 20th-century India, considerable study of French economic history could be justified in our effort to tackle modern India's problems. Not much has been achieved yet by this approach, although Colin Clark's *The Conditions of Economic Progress* (3rd edition, London, 1958) provides hints of how some past patterns in advanced countries are repeated in developing ones, and William W. Lockwood's *The Economic Development of Japan* (Princeton University Press, 1954) contains suggestive analyses of Japanese history which may be relevant in other Asian countries.

The other approach is cross-cultural. By surveying a large number of underdeveloped economies, one may find some features common to all. Perhaps there are a few strategic factors which crucially affect development. Such strategic factors need not all be economic; they may include the form of family or kinship relations, aspects of social structure, and features of religious beliefs and values. One famous work on cross-cultural lines is the book by S. Kuznets, W. E. Moore, and J. J. Spengler, *Economic Growth: Brazil, India, Japan* (Duke University Press, 1956); another is Charles P. Kindleberger's refreshing text, *Economic Development* (McGraw-Hill, 1958).

Four recent books exhibit, each in its own way, the varying approaches to the study of economic development. Albert Imlah's *Economic Elements in the Pax Britannica* (Harvard University Press, 224 pp., $6.00), discusses a brief historical episode, the development of British economic relations overseas in the 19th century. Edward C. Banfield's *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (Free Press, 204 pp., $4.00) concentrates on a contemporary backward society, in southern Italy, paying special attention to the factors which retard economic advance. A. J. Youngson's *Possibilities of Economic Progress* (Cambridge University Press, 325 pp., $6.00), studies the recent history of four Western societies, and attempts to isolate common factors in all four which seem to have played a strategic role in their economic development. Finally, Albert O. Hirschman's *The Strategy of Economic Development* (Yale University Press, 217 pp., $4.50), is a cross-cultural analysis of crucial economic factors in the development of backward countries today.

Imlah's book, a straightforward economic history, first describes the extent of British foreign trade, her balance of payments, and her terms of trade in the 19th century; then Imlah attempts to analyze the underlying foreign economic policy. The first three chapters are models of research in historical statistics. The last two, dealing with the changing policies from protection to free trade, present some of the explanations for the tremendous growth of British trade. They are of special interest from the viewpoint of economic development because Imlah shows that the growth

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of Britain's import trade, and the repeal of her tariffs, stimulated economic growth in the countries which traded with the United Kingdom.

By the middle of the 19th century, Britain absorbed about a third of the world's exports; by 1913, the total volume of her trade had multiplied twelve-fold, and she still bought one-sixth of the globe's exports. Britain's superior manufacturing, and her willingness to buy increasing quantities of raw materials and foodstuffs from others, provided her trade partners with cheap finished goods and a market for their own surplus commodities. Although it has often been said that free trade ruined English agriculture, Imlah demonstrates convincingly that this was not so. In fact, English farming prospered during the 1860's and experienced a gradual (not at all drastic) decline only with the world-wide fall in prices after the crisis of 1873.

There are strong similarities between Britain's world position in the 19th century and ours now. Yet the United States today, unlike Britain then, has neither liberalized its trade nor engaged in a really broad program of private foreign investment. One cannot dismiss this point by saying that Britain chose trade, whereas we prefer aid. Such aid may be necessary; perhaps all our foreign objectives cannot be met by trade and private investment alone. But the removal of U. S. import barriers (rather than their enhancement by farm subsidies, import quotas, etc.) would surely provide underdeveloped countries with a much larger amount of dollars; and the extension of private investment overseas would considerably enhance the economic potential of the underdeveloped countries. Aid might still be given to meet political and military needs, but a large part of the *economic* goals of the underdeveloped countries can be met by the ordinary processes of trade and investment, which are much more efficient than governmental aid in promoting development.

Like Imlah's, Banfield's study is concerned with a narrow problem. Banfield has travelled to southern Italy, beyond Eboli, to study the impact of family and kinship relations on economic growth and stagnation. He is concerned mainly with socio-psychological and socio-structural, rather than historical, material. He believes that the southern Italians' inability to cooperate, their principle of "amoral familism," prevents their community from developing. Among Banfield's villagers, the only group which commands a person's loyalty is his family; he will share with and sacrifice for its members, but regards all those outside the family as competitors and potential enemies. Banfield's central thesis is that these values, which are firmly anchored in southern Italy's communes, explain their economic impotence.

"Amoral familism" is indeed widespread in peasant societies, but it is difficult to argue that it is the chief impediment to economic progress. Several other social and economic features exist which tend to block development—such as rigid hierarchy in social rankings, peasant indebtedness (which entails the inability to innovate), traditionalism in production techniques, and the inability to perceive economic alternatives. Economic progress is slow even in peasant societies in which "amoral familism" is not present, such as rural Java or among certain Negro peoples of West Africa.

Banfield's study, like many such works, raises as many questions as it answers. What are the origins of this exclusive family loyalty in southern Italy? We usually note such loyalty in societies (such as India) in which the "extended family," embracing scores of persons, is strong; in Italy this is not the case. There the loyalty is to the small, "nuclear" family. Is this loyalty a survival from an earlier day in which extended families did exist? If so, why did it survive? How long, indeed, has southern Italian society been characterized by nuclear families? What are the advantages of communal living, and how could a communal life be built in a society which is atomized into small family units? Perhaps these questions cannot be answered; yet they should at least have been explored if social atomism is held chiefly responsible for the misery of the population. In this case greater historical depth might have revealed a more coherent explanation.

YET, historical depth is not always the answer, as we see from Youngson's *Possibilities of Economic Progress*. This book is in two parts. The first restates some theoretical concepts of economic growth; the second, the more distinguished part, analyzes four case histories of economic development. Youngson studies what is commonly called the "take-off into self-sustained growth"—the period of new and rapid industrialization—in Great Britain, Sweden, Denmark, and the southern United

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States. He notes the following significant common characteristics: (1) increased international demand for the country's products, (2) a long previous history of thorough-going agricultural reform, and (3) significant "inter-trade and inter-sectoral relationships" (a clumsy phrase we will explain below).

Youngson's historical findings tally with those of Ragnar Nurkse and Harvey Leibenstein, who have analyzed today's underdeveloped countries and who stress Youngson's third point: the interdependence of a whole chain of industrial branches which stimulate each other. Their theory of balanced growth—the so-called "big push" theory—proposes a massive effort along many fronts to overcome obstacles to economic development.

Hirschman's book gives a lucid illustration of this theory. If, say, a large shoe factory—and no other—is established in an underdeveloped country, the theory is that it will probably fail; its employees could not buy all the shoes it produced, and the other people in the country, caught in the vicious circle of poverty, could not afford to buy them either. If, on the other hand, the shoe factory was established simultaneously with others producing textiles, foodstuffs, and other consumer goods, the workers of the different factories could buy each other's products and none of them would fail. Hence, a massive investment effort, a "big push," is needed to get an underdeveloped country over the hump. This pattern is what Youngson has in mind when he speaks of "inter-trade and inter-sectoral relationships."

Because the development of one industry undeniably stimulates others, the theory of balanced growth has achieved considerable popularity among Asian and African planners. But the theory's handsome logic does not completely correspond to reality. It is, as Hirschman points out, "reminiscent of the paradox about the string that is equally strong everywhere and that therefore when pulled cannot break anywhere first; it either will not break at all or must give way everywhere at once." In actual life, there is no such string, and there is no real society whose productive branches are so equally underdeveloped that one particular new industry would not provide an opening wedge. (Youngson notes such strategic branches of production in his account of the British, Swedish, Danish, and southern United States economies.)

It is difficult to see how Youngson's over-all findings apply to most underdeveloped countries today. To begin with, the economies he examined were considerably more advanced at the time his story begins than the underdeveloped countries of our day. Backward as these four economies were, compared with what they were to achieve later, they were much less so than, say, Burma is today in relation to West Germany. Furthermore, there was less population pressure, and even when there was some, there was a safety valve in mass emigration. All this was true, incidentally, not only of the Western European countries, but also of the Soviet Union at the time of the first five-year plan: Russia had undergone very substantial industrialization over a period of four decades before the Revolution.

The advice Youngson offers the underdeveloped countries of today is largely irrelevant, since he proposes, in essence, that they should emulate the four countries he investigated. He also recommends that they create a "more tolerant and flexible social system," because caste systems and "semi-feudal" institutions are built-in brakes against economic advance. Unfortunately, most of this is only too well known to policy-makers in underdeveloped countries, but they are unable to act on such advice. The government of India has learned to its chagrin that caste cannot be legislated out of existence; and, as any observer of the Western countries has learned, feudalism strongly resists its own abolition and reappears in new guises long after it is thought to be dead.

Hence, for all the scientific rigor of Youngson's historical account, his conclusions come dangerously close to the preachments which were typical of the first phase of development literature. His book shows how some countries, whose economies enjoyed special advantages at the beginning of their "take-off" period, made these advantages pay off; but it lacks sufficient realism to serve countries which do not enjoy these advantages.

Such realism is contained in abundant measure in Hirschman's study. A book written in a rather technical style, abounding in new terms, it has little to offer non-economists, and is probably above the heads of many persons who ought to read it (notably policy-makers in underdeveloped countries). Its great merit, however, is its lack of presumption. Hirschman has no magic formula, no pet

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theory to sell. He freely borrows ideas from others which serve his purposes, and they often look better as used by him than they did in their original context.

Hirschman contends that economic development is a process which, in overcoming certain tensions, unleashes all sorts of new ones. (Many of these tensions are well known by now, notably that between mass aspirations and productive results.) As a result, there is often an almost insuperable wish to overcome these tensions by "one convulsive investment effort, one large-scale expropriation, or one 'short' term of dictatorial rule."

Hirschman's book seeks to present a way out of these "sterile" alternatives. He believes that governments in underdeveloped countries must recognize that the social, economic, and political fabric of a society is inevitably strained when it is raised from a low to a high level of economic performance and social integration. Strains and tensions can never be wholly abolished, though gradual and piecemeal solutions are possible in almost all circumstances. The "sterile" expedients of dictatorship, expropriation, and forced austerity "stem from a basic disbelief in, and distaste for, the *process* of economic development." Such expedients, characterized by "futility and brutality," are in the last analysis utopian. Dictatorship is not only brutal; it is a hindrance to genuine economic development. As we can see from Peron's Argentina or Stalin's Russia, dictatorship may hurdle certain immediate problems of production—it can build a dam or a steel plant—but it is incapable of creating the subtle human and social attitudes which are the surest guarantee of economic progress in the long run.

Hirschman recognizes that underdeveloped countries have most of the basic skills, and even some of the capital, needed for economic progress. Their backwardness is due to their inability to combine skills and capital in the most productive manner. This optimum combination is, of course, the key to the mysteries of economic progress. A number of very critical choices must be made in the development process—choices between short-run and long-run maximization of output; between providing certain commodities through domestic production or through imports; between allocating scarce resources for social overhead or directly productive capital outlays; and, perhaps most important in many countries, between the public and the private sectors.

In theory, all these choices can be made rationally by applying "traditional" economic principles. In practice, however, the influence of various social and political factors often leads to solutions which are unsound from a purely economic viewpoint. The underdeveloped countries of our time, for example, almost all contain one or more "showpiece" industrial establishments; some have called these the modern equivalent of the Pyramids. Yet, though an ultra-modern, big steel mill may be economically questionable in a small country, its symbolic, political effect may outweigh all other considerations. Hirschman agrees with Youngson that "we must remember how widely political systems differ from one another, and how important these differences can be." But quite apart from differences of political systems, and the constant internal pressures of the development process itself, the underdeveloped states are also affected by the great world conflicts.

The impact of these international tensions can be seen clearly in the case of India, which is in any case torn between the strong belief of its leaders in democratic processes and the long tradition of authoritarianism in its history. If the rivalry with Pakistan did not exist, India claims, she could spend more on economic development and less on defense. American military aid to Pakistan increases the pressure. At the same time, the break-neck pace of China's industrialization is felt to be a challenge to India. But, though she wants to keep pace with China industrially, India must devote more of her resources to agricultural development if she wants to feed her growing population. Higher living standards—food and other consumer-goods—are a political necessity, too, since India's masses demand tangible fruits from their enlarged productive efforts. A terroristic dictatorship like China can afford for some time to promise its people pie in the sky; a democratic government must deliver here and now at its peril. All these factors—the popular clamor for higher living standards, defense needs magnified by fear of Pakistan, competition with China for leadership in Asia—make demands on India's available resources which it cannot meet without either unbearable strain or massive foreign aid. But foreign aid means recognition of a degree of dependence on the wealthy foreigners; and a country which has so recently emerged from colonial status has difficulty in accepting this in good grace.

No one can offer unequivocal solutions for

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all the problems of this type that may come up in so many underdeveloped countries, and Hirschman does not try. What he does do, with admirable clarity and incisiveness, is to outline the costs and benefits of alternative policies, the prices a country must pay if it chooses one or another line of development. His analysis is realistic in that it is based on the actual experiences of underdeveloped countries. He has correlated a vast number of successful and unsuccessful experiments in economic development and distilled from them principles which apply to all.

He discusses, for example, the methods for making choices in developing the social overhead of a backward society: roads, public buildings, schools, hospitals, power stations, etc. How many lanes should a road have? How well-surfaced should it be? Should one sacrifice the length of a highway network to the quality or width of the roads or vice-versa? What answer will be given in a particular case will depend on special conditions, some of which Hirschman attempts to make clear.

Having rejected the alternative of the "big push" or the massive one-shot investment program, Hirschman favors the drawing up of rather detailed development plans, whether the plan is to be fulfilled centrally or by private decision. A plan is useful because it shows the gaps in knowledge, availability of resources, capital requirements, and other necessary data; and it also forces the planners to think through the process of economic development as a connected series of events. In planning for next year's production, one must take account of what this production is to serve two, three, and more years hence. (If industry is to turn out complex machinery in five years, one may have to allow now for the building of technical schools, so that skilled mechanics will be available in five years.) Through this kind of planning, one gains insight into the relations between the different parts of the economy, and indeed, into the social structure. The drawing up of a plan in itself presents the choices that need to be made and, if rationally analyzed, suggests solutions to these choices.

These four books, which are of fairly even quality, show the variety and complexity of the factors impinging on economic development. They also show that one approach leads only to limited insights, and that answers derived from special cases may be misleading. Definite knowledge is available for limited cases, but we are still a long way from a realistic general theory of economic development.

This creates a hard task for writers of textbooks on economic development. Of all the efforts to write such a textbook, Charles Kindleberger's is perhaps the most successful. He collects his data from a wide area and is quite explicit about his facts; his book abounds in clear, well-designed tables and charts. But Kindleberger handles only economic data, and though he agrees that political and social realities profoundly influence development, he is rather naive about the non-economic factors.

Indeed, the main obstacle to a more integrated theory of economic development does not lie on the economic side. Compared with sociology and politics, economics is a "hard" science. In the field of history there is no lack of well-established methodology, but historians have tended to concern themselves with specific events which cast little light on such timeless global problems as the development process itself. (The books by Imlah and Youngson are praiseworthy exceptions.) There is, as yet, too little basic factual knowledge available in historical and socio-cultural studies to permit a well-rounded theory of economic growth. The contemporary literature provides valuable data and useful hypotheses, but it will take many years until a genuine synthesis becomes possible. One may well doubt that a realistic general theory is ever possible.

The world, however, cannot and will not wait for such a theory. Even if we had one now, it would probably not be applied, in view of Keynes's dictum that policymakers usually implement the theories of a generation ago. Indeed, many of today's development plans are strongly influenced by the Keynesian thinking characteristic of the world depression, while others reflect Soviet ideas derived from the early five-year plans. Yet the slow progress in some countries (e.g., India) and the repeated setbacks in others (e.g., China) seem to call for new approaches.

Meanwhile, the chief guide line for the Western democracies can only be that economic development must imply a rise in living standards. The production achievements in the Communist countries have had little meaning for the masses of these countries who have not benefited from increased production. Our fundamental assumption should be that economic development is only worth the effort if it can

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be translated into better health, more food, better housing, more education, and, in general, more of the good things of life—for the masses of people, and not just for a privileged "new class."

Once we put man at the center of our thinking, we also realize that the chief means of economic progress is the improvement of the productive potentialities of human beings. Capital is important and so are markets, but too much of the literature on economic development has paid them almost exclusive attention. The improvement of human skills and capacities has certainly been decisive in our own economic advancement. In the United States, tangible capital increased by 1.8 per cent annually between 1919 and 1957, whereas income increased in the same time by 3.1 per cent annually. In other words, income in the United States has risen faster than capital and man-hours worked. The only explanation for this astonishing increase in productivity is the improvement in the human factor—a result of increased training, education, and additional capabilities based on health and new knowledge. Primary schools may thus be more decisive for India's economic development than steel plants.

But if we regard the improvement of human capabilities as a central strategy of economic development, we must also take account of the social and political context in the underdeveloped countries. Youngson's proposal that policymakers should introduce greater social and political flexibility into their societies is good, but essentially empty, advice. It is in this field that social research can perhaps make a major contribution. No society is completely immobile. Nowhere is the cake of custom so hard that it cannot be cracked. But the image of Western rugged individualism, or of Western social and political institutions, is not a model which can be held up before the societies of Asia and Africa with the simple advice: "do likewise." What one must study are the ways and means by which change is possible within the traditions of each society. It is easy to say that if the Burmese had a Protestant ethic they would act like New Englanders. It is more difficult, though more useful, to locate those mechanisms within the Burmese system of values which operate in a direction parallel to that of the Protestant ethic in New England.

In this field, we are still dreadfully ignorant. We know very little as yet of how interstices in the caste-system can be utilized to produce greater social mobility in India. We know even less of how the customs of the people of Africa or Southeast Asia can be pressed into the service of economic progress. And we know least of all how the religious and cultural values of the peoples in underdeveloped countries everywhere influence attitudes towards wealth, its acquisition and use, patterns of consumption, and the motives behind economic and productive activity.

Our policy-makers have not even fully realized that the imposition of dictatorship and the application of brute force have even more sterile results in the manipulation of social custom than in the field of capital investment. For by enslaving men one only prevents them from working out positive, creative solutions to their new social problems. What ultimately assures economic progress is not the piling up of masses of capital on the backs of an enslaved population, but the development of social, motivational, and behavioral patterns in accordance with which men act of their free will for the betterment of all. In this sense economic progress, like war and peace, is made in the minds of men.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

"Exporting" Parliaments

To the Editor of Commentary:

As a conservative, I find the stress placed on parliamentary institutions and governmental checks and balances in William J. Newman's article "Liberal Government for 'Backward' States" (March) is more in keeping with the ideas of Locke, Burke, or Montesquieu than with the politics of so-called liberals. I am willing to admit, however, that this may be a matter of opinion, but what is obviously not a matter of opinion is the asinine theory advanced in the article that parliamentary institutions can be exported willy-nilly around the face of the globe.

Centuries of tradition have imbedded parliamentary government into the way of life and thinking of the people of England, the United States, and Western Europe. With the exceptions of Israel and possibly India, there is not a single one of the new nations—or the colonies about to be made into nations—emotionally, morally, or mentally equipped to organize and maintain a parliamentary government. The leaders of both Israel and India are heavily indebted to English and Western European social and political ideas.

But Mr. Newman doesn't have to go to Africa or Asia to see how ineffective parliamentary ideas are in the hands of people mentally unequipped to use them. Since the early 19th century the forms of parliamentary government have existed in Latin America. It is not necessary to even consider the major conditions in these countries such as constant revolutionary turmoil, vicious dictatorships, or mob rule as it today exists in Cuba either. Take only one minor point which a parliamentary government operating with reasonable technical efficiency would erase: the wide margin which exists between the passage of social legislation in the most stable of these countries and their actual enforcement.

Dean Lipton

San Francisco, California

Mr. Newman *writes:*

Mr. Lipton's letter does not seem to me to advance the argument very far. He uses the old cliché about the "export" of parliamentary institutions. Whoever suggested "exporting" parliamentary institutions? (What does the phrase mean anyway? That America send a shipload of retired Congressmen to, say, Nigeria?) Is it impossible to conceive that parliamentary institutions can develop in new areas, as in fact they have? Then we are told about centuries of tradition which embedded parliamentary institutions. How many centuries make a tradition? Must it be centuries at all? (If so, then America has yet to qualify.) And if everything is embedded in tradition, how can change be explained? Mr. Lipton, therefore, must claim that India is indebted to England for its social and political ideas. So it is possible for a "backward" state to change and modernize? What can happen once can happen twice. Finally, Latin America is brought out to trot through its paces. Overlooking the fact that I did not say liberal government would work everywhere all the time, Latin America is a good example not only of the futility of dictatorship, but also evidence that liberal government is *still* a possibility—indeed the *only* possibility for stable government.

Kudos

To the Editor of Commentary:

The brilliant story by Philip Roth, "Eli, the Fanatic" in the April issue of Commentary, is one of the most poignant I've read in a long time.

It is worthy of special commendation, and you are also to be commended for printing it, even though it is of unusual length for your publication.

Leon Rosenbloom

Bronx, N. Y.

Job's Expectations

To the Editor of Commentary:

Rabbi Weiner's scholarly critique of *J.B.* ("Job on Broadway," February) begins with the remark: "I wonder, Mr. MacLeish, if you realize how unlikable your character J.B. really is?" The same criticism may be made of the central figure of the Biblical Book. Job's ex-

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patiation upon his own righteousness in Chapter 29 shows his arrogance, in the past as well as now, for he had expected reward: "Then I said: 'I shall die with my nest, / And I shall multiply my days as the phoenix; / My root shall be spread out to the waters, / And the dew shall lie all night upon my branch; / My glory shall be fresh in me, / And my bow shall be renewed in my hand.' "

But good works are involved in human relations; an attitude of cheerful acceptance, of submissive piety, whatever one's lot and whatever one does, is required. In the words of Elihu (and whether Elihu's speeches are later insertions or not, is here immaterial): "Then He declareth unto them their work, / And their transgressions, that they have behaved themselves proudly." There would be ample evidence to suggest that Job has been punished for overweening pride. But our author has stacked the cards. And it is not, after all, an "amazing thing" that God who says to Satan, "Thou didst move Me against him to destroy him without cause," should also be depicted as accepting Job's view that there is no moral order in the universe.

VIVIAN JACOBS

East Orange, New Jersey

Integration and Housing

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

COMMENTARY rendered another significant service by publishing Erwin Knoll's progress report, "Washington: Showcase of Integration" (March). Mr. Knoll solidly refutes the myth that school desegregation has transformed the nation's capital into an all-Negro city.

Many of our lawmakers need to learn the truth about Washington. In a recent television debate between Senator Herman Talmadge of Georgia and Senator Jacob Javits of New York, Senator Talmadge contended—contrary to the facts—that school desegregation has resulted in increased community tensions, lower standards in the schools, and a mass exodus of white residents. Tragically, those espousing segregation have been able to use Congressional committees and the very floor of the Congress to present this warped picture. A sub-committee of the House of Representatives, dominated by Southern congressmen, who set out to prove integration a failure, gained wide publicity with its report to that effect. The minority's dissent was largely ignored.

We were gratified to see Mr. Knoll discuss the housing situation. The so-called "flight" of whites out of central cities since World War II has many causes, and is as prevalent in the South with segregated schools as it is in communities with racially integrated schools. Among the causes of this population movement are a growing middle-class with an accompanying desire for home ownership, an increased number of children, high city rents and a short supply of large apartments, the general deterioration of city services, and identification of suburban living with the "good-life-for-the-children."

Manifestly, the same feelings and desires are present among middle-class nonwhites, but they are generally excluded from the suburbs by racially restrictive real-estate practices.

The irrelevance of race to this whole process is now becoming evident as a growing number of white families move back to the city when well-located, attractive, and reasonably-priced accommodations—near good schools—become available. A few current examples of the willingness of white families to secure housing in integrated neighborhoods may be found in Richmond, California; University City in Detroit; Prairie Shores in Chicago, and several developments in New York City. We are confident in predicting that, if Washington's new redevelopment housing meets the standards of these neighborhoods, there will be no shortage of white families moving in.

FRANCES LEVENSON
Executive Director
National Committee Against
Discrimination in Housing

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

An Authentic Leader

CHAIM WEIZMANN. By ISAIAH BERLIN. Farrar, Straus and Cudahy. 60 pp. $2.25.

Reviewed by BEN HALPERN

"To KNOW—to enjoy the friendship of—a great man," says Sir Isaiah Berlin of his great friend, Chaim Weizmann, "must permanently transform one's ideas of what human beings can be or do. . . . Greatness is not a specifically moral attribute. It is not one of the private virtues. It does not belong to the realm of personal relations. . . . [In] the realm of action, the great man seems able, almost alone and singlehanded, to transform one form of life into another; or —what in the end comes to the same—permanently and radically alters the outlook and values of a significant body of human beings. The transformation he effects, if he is truly to deserve his title, must be such as those best qualified to judge consider to be antecedently improbable—something unlikely to be brought about, by the mere force of events, by the 'trends' or 'tendencies' already working at the time—that is to say, something unlikely to occur without the intervention, difficult or impossible to discount in advance, of the man who for this very reason deserves to be described as great."

This set of propositions and the succeeding section of Berlin's brochure, which vaguely attempts to prove that they apply to Weizmann, are the least one could expect of an outstanding philosophical antagonist of historical determinism. It must have been almost automatic for Berlin, when called to deliver a Weizmann Memorial Lecture, to begin by introducing Chaim Weizmann as a hero in history, and to follow with a few paragraphs showing how Weizmann's share in recent Jewish history illustrates the doctrine that history is made by heroes. Fortunately, he makes only a perfunctory effort to substantiate this point, and goes on to his real and fascinating subject—Weizmann's private and public virtues, his moral attributes, his qualities as a person and a political figure.

Whether or not heroes, as a general rule, achieve the "antecedently improbable" in history and singlehandedly transform human life is a subject that can be argued with charm and grace, as Berlin himself has shown. But an attempt really to prove this about any particular hero is practically certain to become pedantic and ill-humored. For to prove that the hero of a particular situation is one particular person means almost inevitably to discredit the claims of others who were involved in the same events. And the method necessarily employed in such "demonstrations" is an unesthetic, tedious, and petty chain of quibbles.

It is easier, moreover, to disprove the claims of any particular hero than it is to affirm those of another. A contemporary historian of Zionist affairs, Oscar K. Rabinowicz, has been following Weizmann's trail for years with ferocious pertinacity, and has turned up incident after incident in which achievements attributed to Weizmann are proved to be legendary, or where Weizmann appears in an unheroic role. On the other hand, Rabinowicz's affirmative argument, seeking to demonstrate that Theodore Herzl was the hero who achieved (among other things) the Balfour Declaration, is very far from convincing.

Luckily, Berlin soon turns from trying to prove Weizmann the prime creator of the Zionist achievement to giving us a sensitive, human, and illuminating portrait of his friend. Weizmann's private virtues and moral attributes, of which Berlin gives a striking account, can be described in a word as "positive." Realism, optimism, self-confidence, and rootedness; the mental and moral health of a vigorously extroverted attitude; a monolithic solidity of character, relatively free of self-pity and self-deception; a synthetic rather than an analytic mind, an applied rather than a pure scientist; a harmonious nature, free from the bigoted rationalism of the ideologist who believes in final solutions

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for which no human suffering can be too high a price; an empiricist, for whom ideas were primarily important as tools of practical judgment; an imperious and unsentimental leader, detached and ironical, who addressed himself to the intelligence, not the passions, and who yet enjoyed the confidence of the vast majority of his people; an irresistible political seducer of those imaginative and generous natures among the English whom he himself liked almost too well—these are the lines of the character of Weizmann which Berlin has drawn. Weizmann's greatness resides in the hold which this character had upon the imaginations both of the Jews whom he represented and the British political leaders who saw in him the representative Jew.

More than any other figure of recent times, Weizmann was the leader in whom the vast majority of Jews saw a model of their own virtues and moral attributes. His tough-mindedness and humor, his vitality and appetite for life, his ability to find positive advantage in any turn of events, his realism and practicality, his instinctive recoiling from anything *outré* and extremist—in all these he was a Jew of the Pale of Settlement, a notable exemplar of an authentic type. Weizmann himself remained always fully and proudly aware of this, and it served him as the bedrock foundation of his political strength, not only among Jews but as a Jewish representative to England.

It is not quite true, however, as Berlin would have us believe, that the Zionist movement was a solid block of positive characters who were "neither zealots nor reformers, but normal human beings," and that they instinctively chose Weizmann as their leader because he was like them. Indeed, the Zionist movement rejected Weizmann's leadership on two separate, critical occasions (one wonders whether any other leader so completely dominated his time and yet was so often abandoned); and, when at the close of his career he became the first President of Israel, he knew quite well what this honor meant—homage to his person together with a certificate of honorable discharge from leadership. Besides, other leaders, who appealed to the Zionists as true heroes, were often enough men whose character broke the mold of the Pale, who were in fact *outré* and extremist, zealots and reformers, and not simply normal human beings.

Yet, Weizmann's leadership, too, contained in it an element of something larger than life. He was the Jewish leader—and this was a novel achievement—who attracted the Gentiles because of what was authentically Jewish in his character. In him the Jews saw themselves accepted and admired for what they knew themselves to be, and not for any distortions of themselves, disproportionately noble or exotic, in which the Gentiles could express their contempt for the typical Jew in the very act of applauding the exceptional Jew.

Disraeli and, for that matter, Herzl had been accorded a recognition by the outside world, in part for the strikingly Jewish element of their characters. The proud display of Jewishness in both cases attracted attention and permitted the Gentile the interesting novelty of admiring the Jew instead of conventionally despising him. But both Disraeli and Herzl were non-typical Jews in a sense: together with qualities of exotic Eastern color always conceded to the Chosen People (such as brilliance, flair, excesses of style), they made a display of qualities like boldness and virility which might perhaps have belonged to the Biblical Jews, but were now considered undeniably Gentile. A Gentile could admire such men without altering in the least his opinion of the other Jews he saw about him.

Weizmann carried off a similar performance, but with a significant difference. Balfour or the other British leaders who admired him could very well have gone on disliking the English Jews if they were so inclined, for Weizmann made it quite clear that he was an entirely different type; but he did not, like Herzl or Disraeli, play the role of an interesting throwback to an ancient Hebrew aristocracy. He did not have to recall antiquity, when Jerusalem was a center of civilization and London was a swamp, in order to impress contemporaries with his dignity as a Jew. He stood for an existing, full-blooded, historically effective Jewish type, the Eastern European Jew of the Pale.

When Weizmann spoke to Balfour, the credentials he presented were those of a Russian Zionist leader. He spoke for the great mass who had passionately rejected the offer to Herzl of Uganda as an alternative to Zion; who could no more give up Jerusalem for any other capital than Balfour would accept Paris in place of London. He spoke with the full authority of his conviction that he, and those whom he represented, and not Jewish notables who

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wished to be accepted as English gentlemen, were the true Jewish people. If admiration for Weizmann veiled contempt for other Jews, it could cover a dislike only for Jews who themselves denied the norm of their people. For the Zionists, at any rate, the acceptance of Weizmann by the Gentiles was an acceptance of the Jew as he was; and for this to have been achieved by a Jew of the Pale endowed him with that aura of greatness which true leadership requires.

Romantic and Classic Religion

JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY. By LEO BAECK. Jewish Publication Society. 292 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by HERMAN E. SCHAALMAN

FOR TWO MILLENNIA, the coexistence of Judaism and Christianity has been marked by repeated conflict and controversy. In political and social terms, Christianity's marriage with the temporal power of the state soon rendered the struggle one-sided. In the realm of the spirit, however, Judaism has held its own, and the confrontation of the two systems has produced a considerable body of literature. Hundreds of volumes have been written, most of them by the Church, reflecting the sharp differences between Judaism and Christianity. Because of the Church's powers of censorship and temporal coercion, we must admire the forthrightness with which Jewish authors defended their point of view and even went over to the attack. At times they were forced to use circumspect language, resort to symbols, or employ satire, but on the whole the Jewish case was stated with dignity and courage.

Leo Baeck's collected essays, posthumously published under the title *Judaism and Christianity*, sensitively translated by Walter Kaufmann, are part of this great polemic tradition. Himself the last grand rabbi of Germany, who escaped death in the Theresienstadt camp by a clerk's error, Leo Baeck witnessed the most cruel breakdown of the Jews' relation with Christian civilization. Unlike many others, he realized that the confrontation of Judaism and Christianity could not, and should not, proceed merely in the daily contacts of individuals and communities, but above all in philosophy and theology.

The translator, in an introduction which is a eulogy for a revered teacher and friend, draws attention to the appropriateness of Baeck's beginning his career with the now classic *Essence of Judaism* and ending with *Judaism and Christianity*. Both books are works of apologetics, in the technical, theological sense of that term. *"Das Wesen des Judentums"* (*The Essence of Judaism*) was written as an answer to Harnack's *"Das Wesen des Christentums"* (*What is Christianity?*), and *Judaism and Christianity* is dominated by the essay "Romantic Religion," which is a polemic against Christianity.

In reading *Judaism and Christianity*, furthermore, one realizes to what extent *Essence of Judaism* was Baeck's *magnum opus*. This first book contains a clear, fully developed outline of his thought, of which the major essay as well as "Mystery and Commandment" in the latest volume are basically a re-statement; while the other essays in this book, "The Son of Man," "The Gospels as a Documentary of the History of the Jewish Faith," and "The Faith of Paul," constitute scholarly raw material for contrasting Judaism and Christianity.

In "Romantic Religion," Baeck draws sharply contrasting opposites of classic and romantic religion, of Judaism and Christianity. Romantic religion, Christianity, "seeks its goals in the now mythical, now mystical visions of the imagination." To the believer in romantic religion, mood and feeling are central. "Reality becomes mere mood; and moods, eventually, the only reality." Schleiermacher's definition of religion as "the feeling of absolute dependence" sums up the romantic condition. By contrast, "In classical religion, longing strives ever and again for the goal which is to unify all men and impels them to follow the commandment of God. . . . For all future is here the future of the commandment, the future in which it is realized and fulfilled."

BAECK acknowledges that there are romantic elements not only in Christianity but in every religion; in fact, romanticism is often historically necessary as an antidote to other positions, for instance, to what passes as "liberal" religion. Romanticism contradicts "that shallow reasonableness which would dispose of everything . . . that enlightenment which has knowledge of and answers to everything . . . that activism which would take care of and execute everything."

Thus, in Baeck's view, classical religion, classical Judaism, rejects mysticism in which

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the striving for the absorption in God, the "experience," leads to the neglect—and implies perhaps even the uselessness—of the commandment (a danger against which Jewish Mysticism, whether of earlier Cabbalah or later Hasidism, struggled continuously); but it also refuses to be reduced to pure rationalism or pure ethicism. Classical Judaism is both mystery and commandment, at one and the same time.

In romantic religion, however, the will to action becomes paralyzed. "Man's whole existence is transformed into longing—not into the longing for God, in which man, raising himself above the earth, overcomes his earthly solitude; nor into the powerful longing of the will which thirsts for deeds." In fact, the whole realm of the ethical becomes problematic. In many passages, particularly those which deal with Paul, Baeck insists that faith not works, belief not law, are the decisive elements of Christianity. It is "the path that leads away from justice." Belief supersedes ethics; faith and the feeling of having been saved replace the impulse and necessity of moral action. "Law" is abolished, and "commandment" becomes the unacceptable antithesis to "faith."

THE basic stance of the romantic is passivity. Morally, "he is the object of virtue and sin—not its producer, its subject." Human life is held in tension not between man's striving for the fulfillment of ethical goals and his recurrent failure to achieve them (as in Judaism), but rather between original sin and election. Both of these are outside man's power, the one inhering through birth, the other a gift of the grace of God. Even man's "faith cannot be won, but only be given by grace." This faith itself is evidence of man's helplessness: "The salvation that comes through faith is in no sense earned, but wholly received."

With telling force Baeck quotes Luther on this, as on many other points, showing not merely the continuity of the romantic position over the centuries, but its "pure" form; *"velut paralyticum* [as one paralyzed], man should wait for salvation and faith." The grace of God, wholly unearned, wholly beyond the will and act of man, displaces the notion of God's commandment. (In Judaism, on the other hand, faith and law are fused: "The world of Judaism is to be found only where faith has its commandment, and the commandment its faith.")

The consequences of the romantic position are far-reaching, not only for the individual but for society as a whole. Civilization or forces which aim at active participation in history can enter, at best, a most uneasy alliance with romantic religion and more often find themselves struggling against it. Not only does romantic religion become "redemption from the will"; ultimately, it promotes "a faith in redemption from the world and its demands." It does not develop, as does Judaism, "trust in the world or, to be more precise, the assurance of reconciliation."

Baeck describes the sacrament as the vessel in which the living experience, so indispensable to romantic religion, can be caught and preserved. Precisely because this is its nature, man again becomes merely the recipient, the object. "The sacrament is said to work . . . quite independently of the human will and of anything a person might contribute—working simply by happening, *ex opere operato*." By contrast, the commandment given through revelation, which we find in Judaism, is inherently unfinished in form; one commandment begets the next. Commandment has in it not merely the notion of an immediate act to be performed but also, like the ethical task, points beyond itself.

Because *Judaism and Christianity* is a polemical work, Baeck's main interest is to state a position, not to analyze or to weigh each point dispassionately. He draws sharp contrasts for the sake of clarity and, inevitably, the contrasts sometimes become too sharp. For example, Baeck relies almost exclusively on Paul and Luther for his image of Christianity. Lutheranism was, of course, his immediate environment. In a few passages, he acknowledges that Catholicism and Calvinist Protestantism at times modify the positions of Paul and Luther. ("Calvinism began to recognize more clearly that there is a liberating, ethical power in worldly work. . . ." "The human desire for deeds made its demands. . . . Through the sacrament of penance the [Catholic] Church made a place for it.") Such statements, however, merely highlight the dilemma of romantic religion as it is torn between its commitment to the City of God and its task as a functioning power in the world. They do not reflect sufficiently, it would seem, the historic responsibilities which even Lutheranism assumed in the making of European life.

Had greater weight been given to the Catholic and non-Lutheran points of view, the in-

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tensity of the contrasts drawn would have been reduced. Certainly much of American Christian thought and practice differs from the image of Christianity as outlined by Baeck. Yet these are only small strictures on what is a most stimulating, profound book on the nature of Christianity and Judaism, which constitutes a major contribution to the continuing dialogue between two great systems of religious thought and practice.

Bringing Up Mama

THE CHANGING AMERICAN PARENT. By DANIEL R. MILLER and GUY E. SWANSON. John Wiley and Sons. 302 pp. $6.50.

Reviewed by DENNIS H. WRONG

THIS is the Age of Spock and Gesell, of child psychiatry, progressive education, and a host of other child-rearing pedagogies devised by professional experts and marketed under the brand of Science. Those who deplore our bondage to the experts often wistfully recall the past, which may mean anything from twenty-five to one hundred years ago. Then, children were allegedly raised not by the book but according to the precepts of common sense and traditional wisedom, handed down through the ages from mothers to daughters. As the opening chapter of this book by two University of Michigan social scientists indicates, this picture is, to say the least, an exaggeration. Books, manuals, and magazine articles on child-rearing date back at least to the late 18th century, and we may assume that they were read for guidance by middle- and upper-class parents if not by the wider audience exposed to their present-day counterparts.

In the early 19th century, the most prevalent view of the child bore the marks of Calvinism. The child was believed to be born with "the Devil in him" and the task of the parent was to "break his will" by imposing stern punitive discipline. But even at this date there was a trend toward a more "permissive" outlook, picturing the child as a "flower opening to the sunshine" and stressing reward and persuasion in opposition to corporal punishment. By the middle of the century European visitors were already complaining about the irreverence and lack of discipline of American youngsters. Moralistic conceptions of child-training have been conspicuously absent from parental handbooks ever since, although there have otherwise been dizzying ups and downs in fashion. Thumb-sucking and masturbation have been alternately regarded as dangerous, or harmless, or even beneficial; scheduled feeding and early toilet-training have been first recommended and then condemned, and so on.

In the 1930's and 40's, the idea that particular details of infant care have a crucial impact, irreversibly moulding the child's character, became widely current. Since then there there has been a reaction against this overly deterministic view—"diaperology" as its critics christened it—and the figure of the anxious mother tending the baby with one hand while grasping Spock's manual in the other has been held up to derision. Parents are nowadays urged—often by the books themselves—to follow their own instincts and feelings instead of relying upon the formulas of the experts which may shortly become outdated. But, in any case, what the child-rearing manuals have advocated and what parents have actually done are two different things. We cannot consult 18th century parents, except for those few rare individuals who have left detailed accounts of how they brought up their children. If we want to find out what contemporary mothers do, however, we can turn to another group of experts, the sociologists.

THE CHANGING AMERICAN PARENT is the latest of a series of studies based on questionnaires submitted to large samples of American mothers, in this case to mothers living in metropolitan Detroit. These studies, of course, don't really tell us what mothers do, only what they say they do and why, but they do provide a mass of information to be run through IBM machines and manipulated statistically in the best traditions of contemporary social research. Professors Miller and Swanson are chiefly interested in the parent's image of the child as reflected in such practices as breast or bottle feeding, early or late bowel training, responses to early sex play, etc. The book's focus on the parent enables it to raise a number of important questions about the relation between contemporary family life and changes in the larger society.

The authors think (and it is hardly a novel thesis) that the United States has recently changed from an "individuated-entrepreneurial" society, characterized by work situations that

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isolated people from one another and forced them to compete, to a "welfare-bureaucratic" society in which a growing segment of the population works for large organizations where personal contacts are mostly cooperative. Following the lead of David Riesman, they suggest some of the implications of this by now almost universally recognized "big change" for attitudes toward ambition, styles of morality, and, ultimately, for methods of child care and parental treatment of the young. Still echoing Riesman, they argue that a more bland, hedonistic approach to the child, equipping him for amicable relations with his peers and willing submission to his superiors, is suited to the demands of a bureaucratic career, whereas rigorous self-control and assertive independence are suited to an entrepreneurial career. (I am, incidentally, amused to see how the ideas of a maverick like Riesman, which were at first coldly rejected or at best patronized as "literary" by the majority of his social science colleagues, are here, after a lapse of only a few years, taken up by a pair of scholars who typify the very model of the modern social scientist.)

The analysis of the questionnaire answers does reveal a slight but unmistakable difference in attitudes toward child rearing between women married to husbands employed in "bureaucratic" occupations and those married to "entrepreneurial" husbands. To put it as simply as possible and therefore somewhat misleadingly: the bureaucratic mothers are a bit more "permissive" than the entrepreneurial mothers. This finding, in itself hardly conclusive, is strengthened by the discovery that fewer differences are evident when the mothers are classified by ethnic origin or by conventional measures of social class. Yet it is hard to say just what it means. As is so often the case with studies of this kind, the authors' general theory is vague and schematic to begin with, and has to be drastically simplified to make it relevant to the rather scanty questionnaire information (this is called "operationalizing one's concepts" in the lingo of the social research technician).

For instance: families are classified as "entrepreneurial" if the father is self-employed, works for a small organization, and earns at least half of his income in profits or fees; also if either parent was born on a farm or in a foreign country. This last criterion seems particularly questionable: the whole world is not necessarily divided between "entrepreneurial" and "bureaucratic" outlooks, like the ancient Chinese view of the universe split between the contending forces of Yin and Yang. Riesman, in addition to his two types that correspond more or less to Miller and Swanson's ("inner" and "other" direction), also recognized a third, "tradition-direction," American examples of which he sought precisely among foreign-born groups. Close examination of a table on page 183 of *The Changing American Parent* indicates, indeed, that the fact of rural or foreign birth, when separated from the other entrepreneurial criteria, shows little relation if any to child-rearing practices. This, in conjunction with the difficulty of discovering just how the authors classify professionals—a group that has been increasing along with bureaucratic white-collar workers—suggests that the findings may reflect nothing more than a difference between small businessmen (the classic petty-bourgeoisie) and the rest of the urban population.

That there is a broad congruence between the institutions and values of a bureaucratic society and the less severe disciplining of chil-

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dren seems entirely plausible. The new dicta of the experts, set forth in the child-rearing manuals, may be superficially responsible for the change, but Miller and Swanson are clearly right in believing that a deeper, more "sociological" explanation is required to account for the increased susceptibility of parents to the experts' recommendations. Moreover, the authors find several discrepancies between what the mothers practice and what the books preach: for example, surely no more hoary bit of traditional lore has been unanimously rejected by the experts than the maxim "spare the rod and spoil the child"; yet bureaucratic mothers are more apt to spank their children, while entrepreneurial mothers are given to lecturing theirs. The authors very ingeniously interpret this to conform with their theory of the shift from an entrepreneurial to a bureaucratic outlook.

However, Miller and Swanson are so eager to demonstrate the reality of the bureaucratic-entrepreneurial difference that they fail to explore the precise nature of the link between working for a large organization and seeing one's children in a new way. Even if it were certain that the differences their data reveal were indisputably real, one would still be compelled to ask just *how* a man's work experience comes to affect his wife's attitude toward the children. Actually, the authors find that the fathers (according to their wives' testimony at least) are stricter and more old-fashioned in their views on child rearing, even though it is the men who have had the newer, more "cooperative" work experiences and the women who are still chiefly concerned with raising the family. Perhaps suburban living has more to do with the matter than work experience, granted that this too is deeply involved in the "big change."

I am also troubled by the readiness of the authors, especially in a "frankly speculative" final chapter, to relegate the restless mobility, competitiveness, and eternal discontent that have for so long seemed to be the distinguishing traits of "modern life" to the bad old entrepreneurial past. I think they miss the subtle dialectical relation between these surviving features of our society and the newer trends toward "togetherness" and "organization men." And, while recognizing the superficiality and sheer silliness of many of the current battle cries against "conformism," I am unable to share their sanguine view about either the quality or the permanence of American life as it is lived in the 1950's.

The Follies of Show Business

THE NINE LIVES OF MIKE TODD. By ART COHN. Random House. 396 pp. $4.95.

CHARLIE: THE IMPROBABLE LIFE AND TIMES OF CHARLES MACARTHUR. By BEN HECHT. Harper. 242 pp. $3.95.

I BLOW MY OWN HORN. By JESSE LASKY, with DON WELDON. Doubleday. 284 pp. $4.50.

TAKE MY LIFE. By EDDIE CANTOR, with JANE KESNER ARIMORE. Doubleday. 288 pp. $3.95.

FANFARE: THE CONFESSIONS OF A PRESS AGENT. By RICHARD MANEY. Harper. 374 pp. $4.95.

Reviewed by HENRY POPKIN

SHOW business is a risky enterprise, and the biographies of its great men record mainly the chances they take. The qualities of the con man and the gambler provide the key to this little stack of show-business biographies. Two play up these traits; two play them down; the fifth views the matter from the sidelines.

In Art Cohn's overwritten biography of Mike Todd, the philosophy of the con man and the gambler is stated, restated, overstated, methodized, apotheosized, and decorated with heavy thoughts from deep thinkers, including Shakespeare, Pascal, Hemingway, Faulkner, and Damon Runyon. At every step, Todd becomes Caesar at the Rubicon, facing a monumental choice—to follow one comedy flop with another, to produce a burlesque show on Broadway, to speed up *Hamlet*, to cast Mae West as Catherine the Great. The weightiest decisions require internal monologues (in which Todd may call himself "Avrumele"); the most internal of these occurs when the mob tries to move into his night-club: "It was a moment of decision, what Hemingway called 'the moment of truth.'"

Ben Hecht's life of his old collaborator Charles MacArthur is similarly gaudy in style, but its sparkle is more authentic. The biographer's playful manner is obviously inspired by his subject's playful life. MacArthur, an authentic pixie, was what Hecht called another playwright: "a fine high-wire act." He was the prototype of many film heroes, a Cary Grant

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type—"a graceful and unpredictable hero, full of off-beat rejoinders; a sort of winsome onlooker at life, no matter how hysterical the plot." Hecht considers MacArthur's carefree existence the only way to live in a meaningless world, but he would be the last to use it as the text for a sermon. Cohn, by way of contrast, takes Todd's wild career more solemnly; as a result, he creates the impression that no one ever chose his course more thoughtfully than the chaotic, eccentric, thoroughly confused Mike Todd.

Two biographies back away from the wilder side of show business. Jesse Lasky's story is told as casually as if he had been a barber. He tells how he turned out Zane Grey films as casually as if he were operating a pair of clippers. He makes a businesslike appraisal of the story of Joan of Arc: "It has decidedly questionable appeal as escape entertainment." But once in a while the big incomes remind us that Lasky was not a barber. And we are struck also by the plain nuttiness of the decisions Lasky could afford to make in the days when every movie earned money. He assigned a new director to an expensive Western because he *thought* the novice had Indian blood. He hired the world's greatest tenor to appear in silent films. He always took his secretary's word on novels for filming.

Lasky's ghost gives a cool account of this freakish world, but Eddie Cantor's ghost specializes in warmth. Where the Lasky biography uses understatement to make its case for normality, the Cantor biography puts great hunks of hominess in evidence. In the midst of the mad world of show business is a banjo-eyed little innocent from home, a good boy, a devoted husband and father, a loyal Jew, a model citizen, as much out of place among his crazy fellow-entertainers as Zeppo always seemed to be among his fellow Marx Brothers. He tells us pathetic stories about his hard fight and everyone else's. Everybody is very nice, or, if someone has been bad, he is sorry. John Barrymore in his sad, drunken last days becomes tame and cooperative, an avid drinker of cokes, when Cantor meets him. (Hecht describes a more manic Barrymore.) Even the critics are nice: "Most of them are pulling for you . . . if you listened to their suggestions and followed them you'd have a better show." (Todd thought critics were fools and snobs. When they praised his *Hamlet,* he showed his scorn by quoting sportswriters in his advertisements.) And, of course, producers are wise. Sam Goldwyn's only mistake seems to have been a turkey called *The Unholy Garden:* "Sam didn't like the story, he didn't like the rushes." (Hecht, who wrote this film with MacArthur, quotes an enthusiastic endorsement from Goldwyn and his assistant.)

In his book, Cantor is silent on his comic techniques, evidently because he is not really interested in being a comedian. His real interest is in *having been* a comedian, so that he may reminisce about his past and apply his fame to good causes. He says nothing of the comic character he created on the screen—the feeble, timid soul whom accident puts in control of destiny. (His radio characterization was less distinct.) He makes no effort to explain the phenomenal popularity he enjoyed or its gradual decline. For three years he had the most popular radio program on the air, at the most desirable hour in the week. (On television, it is now a battleground for Ed Sullivan, Steve Allen, and *Maverick.*) He was the nation's favorite comedian, especially admired by children, who learned to quack-quack just as he did; now, it seems incredible that he was ever at the top. Did he have better writers then? ("Mike Todd heard him: *I can write funnier than that,* Mike said to himself . . . he wrote Cantor and asked for a job as a gag writer." He was turned down.) Probably he succeeded so well because, in his heyday, radio was in its infancy.

One key to Cantor is, I think, the religion he expounds. He seems uncertain whether it is Judaism, Christianity, or a faceless amalgam of both. I suspect it is really a new faith, the religion of public occasions. Cantor puts his finger on one of its epiphanies when, naming the glories of the theatre, he cites a single moment from a play: "Remember in the middle of *South Pacific,* when she [Mary Martin] walked downstage and said, 'Oh, God, please see that he's safe!' " I am not sure who the prophet of this religion is, but its John the Baptist is Skippy, a radio character who used to address "Mr. God" at great length.

Richard Maney's autobiography tells a spectator's story. As a press agent, Maney is a relatively sane and stable historian of the lunacy of show business. When he was told that Orson Welles and Jackie Gleason would co-star in *Volpone,* he wisely ignored the information. The story made the newspapers, but

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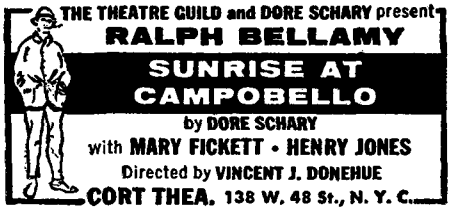
the venture withered. Maney devotes a long, sober chapter to mad decisions that were acted upon, and he thereby documents the element of luck in show business: Roland Young turned down the leads in *Harvey* and *Life with Father*, no one wanted to back *Oklahoma!*, Shirley Booth was almost fired during the rehearsals of *Come Back, Little Sheba*, Billy Rose found no promise in Mary Martin and Benny Goodman, and so on. In short, the masters of the box-office cannot tell what is box-office.

The other biographies offer further corroboration. Lasky was blind to the merits of Fred Astaire ("What could you do with the bald-headed boy?"), Judy Garland, and *Alexander's Ragtime Band*. Cohn credits Todd with a receptive attitude toward *Oklahoma!* (Maney differs) and other signs of sound box-office judgment but concedes his failure to hire Betty Hutton. Maney seems to have observed more misjudgment than anyone else, and, perhaps as a consequence, he is more concerned with taste and quality than any other author or subject of these volumes.

Show business is a madman's business; geniuses are ruined, and idiots succeed. The element of luck attracts the gambler, the *luftmensch*, the con man. Todd prepared for his career as a producer by cheating an employer who had a crooked game at a fair, running a crap game, selling bootleg liquor, founding a dubious "College of Bricklaying," and promoting horse races. Only these experiences made him capable of the delicate juggling that permitted him to finance *Around the World in Eighty Days*. Lasky tells how one of the pioneer film producers got his start when he printed some stationery identifying him as president of a film company which was torn by litigation. Each faction assumed he was the other's choice, and this misconception made him a real potentate. Lasky himself kited a check to finance *Sergeant York* and was able to make it good only when he sold Harry Warner on the film's patriotic values. But the honest gamblers sometimes draw the line at the gangsters whom show business attracts. Todd got out when the mob moved into his night club. Maney refused to represent a play that was backed by Waxey Gordon.

Even if the gambler's spirit dominates, someone has to exercise some taste. Some men have risen in show business on the basis of their presumably sound taste. Flo Ziegfeld, who was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Cantor's employer and in some respects the model for Todd and Goldwyn, is often given as an example. But the more I read in Cantor's biography of Ziegfeld's insistence on quality, the more it looks like insistence on quantity—the biggest sets, the most expensive drapes, the most girls. Still, Ziegfeld's choice of comedians —Will Rogers, W. C. Fields, Bert Williams, in addition to Cantor—was masterly, though Cantor tells us that Ziegfeld "knew nothing about comedy."

Todd, who called his first Broadway show *Call Me Ziggy*, also insisted on quantity. After taking over the Hollywood Bowl for a show no one could see or hear properly, he capped his past triumphs by making the longest (and most profitable) movie, starring the most actors, on the largest screen. Lasky's favorite film artist seems to be Cecil B. DeMille, another master of size. Lasky is proud to proclaim himself a pioneer in quantity, as the maker of an early "epic" (a word roughly synonymous with "long patriotic film") and the real unacknowledged developer of Cinemascope, which enlarged the nation's screens if not its art. Lasky's career, like Todd's, is strewn with pointless, tasteless productions.

But the amiable gamblers have to look out for the squares, businessmen in double-breasted suits who are out to get them. Todd loses a fortune, amasses another, goes into bankruptcy, pioneers a new screen process, is thrown off his company's board of directors, then makes the most profitable film of all time. Ziegfeld produces Broadway's biggest hits and dies broke. Lasky founds a leading film studio, watches his partners Goldwyn and DeMille depart under pressure, and then is himself removed from his job. Cantor announces that he will

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retire at thirty-seven, then loses everything in the crash of 1929, which incidentally impoverishes the normally cautious Maney. Then the enemy takes over—the sober businessman.

Show business has its special camaraderie, the union of insiders who make a point of not being businessmen. They may call one another "darling," or they may speak in their special language, Yiddish. The minority quality of show business is heightened by the prominence of many Jews, including Cantor, Todd, Lasky, Hecht, Goldwyn, and nearly every Broadway press agent except Maney. The patterns of Jewish identity tell a variety of stories and permit no sweeping generalizations; they include Cantor's role as a Jewish spokesman, Hecht's alliance with Israeli terrorism, and Todd's various earnest, troubled Jewish gestures.

Perhaps the Jewish pattern here is determined by what might traditionally be considered the *goyish* qualities of show-business—the unsteadiness, the incaution, the unconventionality. The question is inevitable. What is a good Jew doing among all these madmen? Cantor answers that he is a very good Jew and, besides, these madmen are not madmen. The Jewish note is sounded more defiantly by Hecht and Todd who managed to outdo the lunatics at their lunacy. For Lasky and for others in Hollywood, both Jewishness and lunacy blend into a mild gray landscape that imperfectly disguises the antic atmosphere. Madness becomes them, however, and the show-business war against the greater lunacy of logic should survive any number of disasters to come.

Culture and Radicalism

THE DEMOCRATIC VISTA. By RICHARD CHASE. Doubleday. 180 pp. $3.95.

Reviewed by IRVING HOWE

AT A time when so many American intellectuals have been turning to conservatism, the literary critic Richard Chase has moved in the opposite direction. Invoking the tradition of Randolph Bourne and the early Van Wyck Brooks, *The Democratic Vista* is a call for the reassertion of radical values in American culture—perhaps also in American politics. It is a tentative and a groping book, almost ingenuous in the exposure of its weaknesses; but both as a statement and a sign it seems to me valuable.

The Democratic Vista has won praise from the very people it attacks: reviewers for middlebrow magazines, literary academicians and young critics who seem to feel that Maturity is a goddess sprung full-blown from the brow of Morningside Heights. Every author enjoys praise and Mr. Chase deserves his share; but this kind of praise ought to give him some uneasy moments. For if you write a polemic and the people who are its targets say they like it, *something* is wrong.

Partly the curious amiability with which Mr. Chase's book has been received is due to the sponginess of American culture in the 50's. Dissident criticism, instead of arousing anger and firm response, is often disarmed by a process of bland assimilation; distinctions of opinion are erased by rhetoric, good will, and apathy. But the trouble seems also to arise from the book itself. Mr. Chase first announced his themes in a series of articles that were specific and sharp; in the book these have been rewoven into a dialogue among several characters, the leading one, Ralph Headstrong, speaking for the author and his antagonist, George Middleby, sounding like a smug version of some of the people who have since come along to praise *The Democratic Vista*. Now the dialogue as a form has its pleasantly old-fashioned attractions, and there are genuine advantages to its use in this book, where no pretense is made at creating "real" characters and the voices come through with awkward yet charming bookishness. But I wonder whether the consequent blurring of polemical edge isn't too great a price to pay.

At the same time, I feel uneasy about the harsh attacks to which the book has been subjected from the left, notably by Philip Green in the *New Republic* and Hilton Kramer in *Dissent*. Quick to catch out the obvious deficiencies of Mr. Chase's argument, these reviewers have not troubled to consider the *direction* of his thought, or the possibility that its direction may be more significant than its momentary point of rest; they have failed to see that the book matters as one of the first serious efforts by an American intellectual to reorient himself after the collapse of cold war moods and ideologies.

Through his *alter ego* Ralph Headstrong, Mr. Chase begins with a sharp criticism of contemporary American culture. He is keen at observing the boredom and purposelessness that lie just beneath the surface of so much

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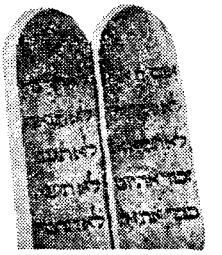
"activity," the loss of zest and animation, the decline of culture into a sort of household convenience. And he asks the right questions: "Will it be possible to keep alive, in an atmosphere of growing conformity, a fruitful versatility of taste and opinion, or are all forms of expression and feelings, above the level of the mass media, being boiled down into a sort of middlebrow mush where all distinctions are lost? How are we to reconcile the American imagination as we find it in our literature—on the whole a literature of extremity, of brilliant fragments, of melodrama, humor, pastoral idyll and romance —with the mild, routine life of the new suburban America?"

It is in response to such questions that Mr. Chase advances his plea for "cultural radicalism," an attitude that would seem to include a continued loyalty to *avant-garde* experimentation, a willingness to think of human existence in extreme terms, an adherence to a radical democratic secularism, and a strong resistance to both mass culture and middlebrow *kitsch*. In the course of his argument Mr. Chase falls back upon the somewhat worn categories of highbrow, middlebrow, and lowbrow, acknowledging that it isn't always clear whether these refer to styles of life, attitudes toward culture, kinds of occupation, or trivialities of manner. Still, I think he is right in saying that, for all their looseness, the "brow" terms cannot easily be avoided in a discussion of American culture. And by using them, Mr. Chase has reached a conclusion of the first importance: that our culture, as it recedes from high and lowbrow intransigence, is settling at "some sort of middle ground of taste and opinion, a general desire for passivity and rest . . . a fear of the turmoil of the mind, a longing to escape conflict, a longing to assuage all the vivid contradictions and anomalies that in the past have engaged the American mind."

Some of the liveliest passages in the book occur when Ralph Headstrong elaborates on this view—passages about the changing nature of American anti-intellectualism (less strident, more insidious), about the way American universities are becoming indistinguishable from the surrounding social landscape, about the peculiar temptations that prosperity puts in the way of writers. Mr. Chase is also very good at explaining why some of the views of his mentor, Van Wyck Brooks, no longer hold. Forty-five years ago Brooks, finding himself troubled by



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the chasm between the intelligentsia and the masses, felt that the goal of a healthy democratic culture should be to bring together the standards of the cultivated minority and the vitality of the plebs. I think it would be a sad mistake if intellectuals were to abandon once and for all this idea of an "organic" culture; but as Mr. Chase explains, a more immediate and urgent need—if only to make possible a later realization of Brooks's goal—is to preserve a sharp sense of cultural excellence such as the prevalent middlebrow mind in America can't envisage, let alone encourage.

As MR. CHASE's argument unfolds, there is some amusing by-play between Headstrong and Middleby, but a by-play that reveals one of the more serious faults of the book. Too many of its references are those peculiar to an "in-group," and to get all of them you probably have to be not only a reader of but also a contributor to *Partisan Review*. Otherwise, you might never guess that a good part of Mr. Chase's polemic has for its target the conservative "moderation" of Lionel Trilling. Mr. Chase has dulled the force of his argument by engaging in anonymous polemics and by resorting occasionally to a Prufrockian archness of manner. Now anonymous polemic is always a dubious affair: it doesn't give your opponent a fair chance to strike back and it leaves the outsider bewildered. But more important, Mr. Chase's approach helps to perpetuate the very gentility and flabbiness he deplores. These days anyone who wants to advance radical ideas, be they in relation to culture or politics, has to risk being charged with bad manners.

Perhaps the best parts of the book are those in which Mr. Chase tries to relate his desire for cultural radicalism with his views on the central tradition of American literature. He is entirely committed to the idea that the central impulse of American literature has been democratic, secular, radical, extremist, and "dialectical" (a term he uses to suggest a mixture of romantic and speculative views which, together, make for an "open" culture). The trouble, however, is that Mr. Chase's argument becomes, in the narrow sense, too *literary*: he tends to treat social and personal problems not in their own right but as they provide touchstones for the literary tradition. At times (to be just a little unfair) his radicalism seems to be asserted primarily as a means of preserving a close relationship to writers like Melville, Whitman, and Emerson. Were George Middleby a bit quicker on his feet, he might tell Headstrong to put these great men aside for a moment and to justify his views in strictly contemporary terms.

But the main difficulty in Mr. Chase's book—a difficulty we all have to face—concerns the relation in our day between politics and culture. At some points Mr. Chase writes as if "cultural radicalism" were a self-sufficient attitude quite compatible with the politics of "the liberal virtues—moderation, compromise, countervailing forces, the vital center, the mixed economy." Which is to say: radicalism in culture, the ADA in politics. If this is a fair deduction from Mr. Chase's argument, it seems necessary to ask: what *content* is a "cultural radicalism" divorced from radical politics to have?

The defense of standards, the assault upon middlebrow complacence, the willingness to look at life in tragic perspective—all excellent; but there is surely no reason to assume that these are confined to radicals. When men like Bourne and the early Brooks asserted a need for cultural radicalism, they were writing as socialists or near-socialists who believed that the need of the moment was to bring politics and culture into a closer relationship, not to pull them apart.

Now I can see one circumstance in which a "cultural radicalism" without an accompanying radical politics might be valid. Intellectuals may feel that they are living in a good and healthy society, one which deserves their basic loyalties, but that it is nevertheless their task to keep prodding it toward a higher level of cultural awareness. This would seem to be the way many American intellectuals now explain, or rationalize, their relationship to our society. Part of the time Mr. Chase writes in this spirit too, as when he tells us that "At present, in its immediate applications, radicalism is not political or economic. . . . For the moment, American politics and economics, on the domestic scene, appear impenetrable, mysterious and roughly successful." If this is true, then "cultural radicalism" has a consistent rationale; but I think it is very far from being true, and so, in his less relaxed moments, does Mr. Chase. At one point he suddenly drops his professorial pose and bursts out with a rush of feeling: "It is time to ask ourselves if a fruitful and humane life will be possible at all in an America full of the flashy and insolent wealth of a permanent war economy, brutalized slums, rampant and dehumanizing Levittowns, race hatred, cynical

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exploitation, and waste of natural resources, government by pressure groups . . . vulgarization and perhaps destruction of our schools, not to mention the sporadic flash and fallout of 'nuclear devices.' Here are enemies enough. Here is the seedbed of new ideologies."

This is well said, and Mr. Chase's list of questions could be extended for pages. But if such questions are to the point, are not the "virtues" of "moderation, compromise, etc." seriously called into doubt? Do our politics and economy seem quite so mysteriously "successful" in mid-1959 as American intellectuals were saying a few years ago? May there not be possible, tomorrow if not today, a new American radicalism which will push beyond the conventional liberal assumptions, yet will not compromise itself with the corruptions and fantasies of the 30's?

Mr. Chase is aware that he is in difficulties here and he even has George Middleby ask, for once, an intelligent question: "I don't see how you can force such a gap between what is, or should be, organic—between politics and culture. Isn't this just an academic stratagem to get yourself off the hook—to allow you, that is, to be radical in merely literary and cultural matters without mingling in the dangerous realities of politics?" To which Mr. Chase, through Headstrong, pointedly replies: "The forcer of the gap . . . is not I but history."

It is here that Mr. Chase's critics from the left ought to show a bit more modesty than they have, since it is here that he puts us on the spot. Denying in effect that there is any significant radical politics in America today (he is right), Mr. Chase would then add, I imagine, that the efforts of those intellectuals involved in a venture like *Dissent* are still essentially "literary." This is true enough, and there is no point in disputing it. All that can be said in turn to Mr. Chase is that the "literary" nature of intellectual radicalism is an undesired limitation under which we chafe and which we hope eventually to remove.

Mr. Chase's reviewers have noticed other difficulties in his book: an all-too-easy assumption that there exists a natural alliance between the literary *avant-garde* and political radicalism; an equally questionable assumption that the *avant-garde* is a "permanent movement" in modern culture (I think, to the contrary, that it has reached a point of at least temporary ex-

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haustion). But it would be captious to end on a negative note. Mr. Chase's book seems to me an important sign of a certain shift in sentiment and opinion, still modest in its proportions, that is beginning to take place among American intellectuals. The worst of the cold war fanaticism has died out. The more vulgar varieties of anti-Communism have lost their appeal (indeed, a new danger is that of a sophisticated reconciliation with Communist power). The jeering scorn to which radicals have been subjected these past fifteen years has begun to soften a little. Faint beginnings can be discerned of a new worry, a new uneasiness. Mr. Chase's book provides a possible way for transforming these responses into ideas; and if some of us feel that it is not strong enough here or clear enough there, we ought to be grateful to him for raising the *problem* of radicalism once again, and in circles where it has become the fashion to dismiss it. We might also remember the old Jewish saying that there is more than one way of getting into paradise.

Suburban Sorrows

THE HOUSEBREAKER OF SHADY HILL. By JOHN CHEEVER. Harper. 185 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by ISA KAPP

IN THESE polished, bittersweet stories, John Cheever is writing (as he has done over a long period in the *New Yorker*) about the fretfulness and decline of heart in middle-class people of middle years. Though he doesn't regard the suburbs as a happy place, he nevertheless invests his refugees from the city with a glow of Arcadian health they never could have hoped for on the fringes of Central Park. A Shady Hill matron can "Have the skis repaired. Book a tennis court. Buy the wine and groceries for the monthly dinner of the Societé Gastronomique du Westchester Nord. Look up some definitions in Larousse. Attend a League of Women Voters Symposium on sewers. . . . Type two and a half pages of her article on the early novels of Henry James . . ." and lie in her husband's arms from eleven till twelve. Ladies do not lose their bounce, and Cheever is ready to believe men will not lose their visionary gleam under the dominion of the garden, the PTA, and the commuting train. The rainbow comes and goes, he insists, in Shady Hill as in the more various universe.

Yet against the wholesome stageprops of dogs prancing through the tomato vines and small girls scratching with sticks in the gravel, there could not be a more dismal series of events than those in *The Housebreaker of Shady Hill*. A husband frozen by bland domesticity falls in love with a young babysitter and is advised to turn to woodwork for therapy. The life of an undistinguished business man is threatened by a timid, unstable secretary whom he fired to avoid being reminded of an evening's intimacy with her. A woman commits adultery out of a passing sympathy for a neighbor snubbed at a Village Council meeting. "O Youth and Beauty!" the characters in Cheever's stories are constantly mourning, as they cower beneath the assault of age on their ego and vitality.

ONE would expect the teller of these tales of chilly and vexatious marriage, of the sorrows of gin and mindless gregariousness, to be burning with curiosity as to what could be so deeply thwarting in a life that nurtures the outward graces. Why should the entire sense of well-being of the "housebreaker," Jimmy Hake, hinge upon the recovery of his job for a parablendeum manufacturer? Why should Francis Weed, the country husband, have been deaf to the song of cardinals and robins till the late moment of his amorousness for the babysitter? Why, for that matter, should he so readily take woodtherapy in exchange for the girl who "put him into a relationship with the world that was mysterious and enthralling"? Would he not at least require some readjustment that touched his philosophy as well as his nerves?

If Mr. Cheever is not racked by these dilemmas, it is because he does not see the situation he describes as especially suburban or especially appalling. He is committed to a biologism that conceives of man in town or country as a relatively ignoble being: obtuse, pleasure-seek-

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ing, unable to resist his vanity. He believes few people to be either moral or powerful, and he therefore presents them always on the treadmill of their small expectations. In general, it seems to have been the fate of many deft and diverting American short story writers to deal in the minor distresses—embarrassment, distaste, melancholia—and to back away from love, death, and sorrow. James Agee, writing about a Noel Coward film, spoke of "certain witty, sad, able, and fastidious men" who defend their essential sentimentality by retreating to the fort of taste and regard for form.

THIS is the company to which Cheever belongs when he, a perfectionist in his own style, takes imperfection and discontent to be a natural element for other men to live in. Like most cynics he can turn, at some very slight stimulus to his senses, into a sentimentalist who must represent things as being much sweeter than they are. Whenever he gets the chance, he smuggles an elegant compensation into his bored suburb. A man may be presented entirely in the context of liquor and servant troubles, as in the story, *The Sorrows of Gin*, yet we leave him listening for the sound of an imaginary Alpine Glockenspiel and seeming "to smell the salt air in the churches of Venice." The parablendeum executive can also measure out his life in daubs of romance: "We have a nice house with a garden and a place outside for cooking meat, and on summer nights, sitting there with the kids and looking into the front of Christina's dress as she bends over to salt the steaks, or just gazing at the lights in Heaven, I am thrilled as I am thrilled by more dangerous pursuits, and I guess this is what is meant by the pain and sweetness of life."

No one could object if this image of sex at the barbecue were a hearty Rabelaisian touch, but it is only one more stir of Cheever's wistful amalgam of feelings. He cannot separate pain from sweetness, poetry from housekeeping, any more than a Sunday Supplement cook can keep mayonnaise off the avocado. If one plans to enjoy the bourgeois blessings, it makes more sense to take them on their own terms which are materialist and confining, not adventurous. Why not gracefully admit that one has, after all, been talking prose all one's life? But the suburbanites of Shady Hill never give themselves fully to their comfortable world, just as Cheever never wholeheartedly affirms the suburban values of the 1950's. Some interior

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struggle is always going on, he suggests, throwing over each exhausted partygoer one or another halo borrowed from some richer or larger existence: the country husband is assigned to woodwork, but with the consciousness that "It is a night where kings in golden suits ride elephants over the mountains." These stories are based on the sophisticated assumption that life must always be full of mixture and compromise; they never pause to consider that there are some crucial issues on which it is wisest not to compromise at all.

Book Reviewers in This Issue

Ben Halpern is an editor of the *Jewish Frontier* and the author of *The American Jew: A Zionist Analysis* (1956). He reviewed *Rebel and Statesman,* a biography of Vladimir Jabotinsky, by Joseph Schechtman in June 1957.

Herman E. Schaalman, a new contributor, is rabbi of Emanuel Congregation in Chicago. Born in Munich, Germany in 1916, he was educated at the University of Cincinnati and Hebrew Union College.

Dennis H. Wrong, professor of sociology at Brown University, has been a frequent contributor. His article, "The Perils of Political Moderation," appeared in our January number.

Henry Popkin, who writes often on the popular arts, teaches English at Brandeis University. He contributed "Hollywood Tackles the Race Issue" to the October 1957 Commentary.

Irving Howe, a founder and editor of *Dissent,* is the author of critical studies of Sherwood Anderson and William Faulkner, as well as *Politics and the Novel* (1957).

Isa Kapp has contributed more than a dozen reviews and several articles to Commentary since 1948. Her most recent article, "Living in Washington, D.C.," appeared in July 1957.

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